The Garden of the Eight Paradises

BĀBUR AND THE CULTURE OF EMPIRE IN CENTRAL ASIA, AFGHANISTAN AND INDIA (1483-1530)



BY

STEPHEN F. DALE

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PREFACE

Writing a biography of Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur has meant relying on generations of scholars, the help of contemporaries and the kindness and tolerance of friends. This biography would not have been possible first of all, were it not for the publication of scholarly editions and translations of Bābur's remarkable autobiography. Three works in particular have been especially important. They are: the critical edition compiled by Professor E. J. Mano of Kyoto University, the first English translation of Bābur's original Turkī text by Annette Susannah Beveridge, the self-taught, late-Victorian scholar, and the edited Turkish translation of Reşit Rahmeti Arat. Beyond these textual foundations I am especially indebted to the scholarship of a group of late Soviet-era scholars, in particular A. Azimdzhanova, I. V. Stebleva, O. D. Chekhovich and Elena A. Davidovich. I first read Bābur's poetry in Azimdzhanova's and Stebleva's Russian translations, and I have greatly benefited from the numismatic and social-economic studies of Davidovich and Chekhovich. Regarding the Tīmūrids in particular, I have been educated by the scholarship and conversations with Beatrice F. Manz, Jo-Ann Gross, Jürgen Paul and Maria E. Subtelny. I have also made repeated use of Wheeler M. Thackston's valuable translations of Bābur's text and that of Bābur's Mongol cousin, Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat.

Over the course of many years I have been especially fortunate to benefit from the expertise of several scholars, especially Thomas T. Allsen, Cornell H. Fleischer and Peter B. Golden, who all have patiently contributed to the knowledge of someone trained primarily in Indo-Islamic studies. I have had innumerable conversations about Central Asia with Tom Allsen, who also has generously supplied me with dozens of references and/or articles and books that reflect his own encylopedic knowledge of Mongol and post-Mongol Central Asia. I first began studying Turkish with Cornell Fleischer, who also, early in my work, presented me with a splendid copy of Arat's Turkish translation of Bābur's autobiography. In many conversations and in his writings Peter Golden has shared his own exceptional knowledge of Turks and Turkish history. Professor

Dona Straley, the scholarly Middle East Librarian at Ohio State University, has also generously supported this work with her own expertise.

Many friends have openly shared my enthusiasm for this project over a course of many years. One of the earliest was Carole J. Dale, who among other things, organized the party to commemorate Bābur's 500th birth anniversary on the steppes of Central Ohio. Alam and Parwin Payind have enriched my own knowledge of Afghan culture—and cuisine—during many conversations and dinners. Beth Russell has graciously listened—on probably too many occasions—to discussions of arcane aspects of Bābur's life and Central Asian, Afghan and Indian history. A number of Uzbek friends and colleagues were wonderfully welcoming and helpful during my most recent trip to Uzbekistan. These include Professor Shermatov Akram of Samarqand State University, Majlis Deputy and Head of the Babur International Fund, Zakhirjon Mashrabov, Dr. Kozimjon Turdaliev of the Andijan Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Professor Saifuddin Jalilov of Andijan State University. Mr. Ted Elder of the Andijan Development Center also went out of his way to help me when I stayed in Andijan. Finally, Anarbaev Abdulhamid of the Uzbek Institute of Archeology kindly took the time to explain the excavations at the site of the ancient city of Akhsi.

I tentatively began this project with a generous grant from the Social Science Research Council that allowed me to make my first trip to then Soviet Uzbekistan. Later I had the opportunity to study Bābur's poetry during a year at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C., where the friendship of Şumit Ganguly and Tapan Raychaudhuri was especially meaningful. A subsequent fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton gave me the time and support to write early drafts of several chapters of the manuscript. The Tīmūrid seminar held at the Institute was an especially valuable forcing ground for some of the ideas in this biography. The College of Humanities at the Ohio State University has given me research leave on several occasions and a grant that supported the publication of illustrations in this volume. The maps were drawn by Mr. Ron Mclean of Ohio State University.

I have dedicated this volume to Lillian Li, whose encouragement, criticism, warmth and laughter have meant more than I can adequately express.

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AA—*Āʿīn-i Akbarī*

AN—*Akbar nāmah*

BN-A—Arat, *Vekayi Babur'un Hātıratı*

BN-B—Beveridge, *The Bābur-Nāma in English*

BN-M—Mano, *Bābur-Nāma (Vaqāyiʿ*)

CHIr—*Cambridge History of Iran*

Dkh—*Dihkhudā*

EI2—*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition

EIr—*Encyclopaedia Iranica*

HN—*Humāyūn nāmah*

Köprülü-zāde—"Bābur Shahʿin Shiʿrleri."

NS—Amīr Khusrau, *Nuh sipihr.*

Stebleva—*Semantika Gazeli Babura*

TJ—*Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*

TR-R—Ross, *Tārīkh-i Rashidī,*

TR-T—Thackston, *Tārīkh-i Rashidī.*

Yücel—*Bābur Dīvānı*

.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Apart from English and Western European languages this biography has relied on secondary sources in Russian and modern Turkish and primary and secondary sources in Persian and Turkī or Chaghatay Turkish. The transliteration system of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is used for Russian, and readers familiar with this language will easily recognize the original Cyrillic terms and titles of books and articles. Modern Turkish is simply rendered in the Latin script of the original. In order to simplify the body of this text Persian, Turkī and Arabic terms, geographic regions and place names are given in glossary in the original Arabic script used by Turkī as well as Arabic and Persian. The Arabic script spelling of these words is based on E. J. Mano's *Concordance and Classified Indexes*, the companion volume to his collated edition of Bābur's autobiography, which is cited in the Introduction. This is done here in order to simply the transliteration system within the body of the text.

In many historical works that deal in whole or in part with Central Asia Turkī and Mongol words are transliterated as if they were Persian. One of the most obvious differences between these languages is the absence of a distinction between long and short vowels in Turkī and the importance of that difference in Persian—and in Arabic. Thus in Persian transliteration تمغا, "seal" or "tax" is rendered as *tamghā* rather than *tamgha*, and تومان as *tūmān* rather than *tuman*. Here these languages are differentiated. For Persian, and Arabic words used in Persian and Turkī phrases, long vowels will be indicated, thus Bābur rather than Babur—but in representing Persian consonants the transliteration used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* will be simplified so that letters with the exact or similar sounds will be represented by one letter. Thus ذ, ز, and ض will all be represented by "z." Those unfamiliar with the exact spelling may refer to the glossary.

Turkī and Mongol words are represented here as simply as possible, rather than following the complex systems that modern linguists use to represent languages not well served by the Arabic script. In terms of vowels, while these languages do not distinguish between long and short vowels, the letters that reflect Turkish vowel harmony have been indicated. These are represented by umlauts or

in the case of the sound represented in modern Turkish by the undotted i, as "ï." Thus كول or "lake" is given as *köl* and not *kūl* and اريق is given as *arïq* and not *arīq* or *ariq*. Regarding consonants the sounds ش and چ that are represented in standard Turkī transliteration systems respectively as š and č, are rendered simply as "sh" and "ch;" ج is given as "j." Otherwise the transliteration follows the simplified Persian system outlined above with the exception that ک represents both "g" and "k" depending on the word. Thus بلوک is *buluk* while بیک is beg.

Compound personal names composed of Persian or Arabic and Turkī or Mongol words are given according to the language in each part of the name. Thus ايوب بيكجيك is given as Ayūb Begchik and not Ayūb Begchīk, and خوبنكارخانيم is given as Khūbnigār Khanïm rather than Khūbnigār Khānīm. Finally, no attempt has been made to distinguish the spelling or pronunciation of geographic regions or place names according to either linguistic origin or local practice. Qarshi, a town near Samarqand, is given with no diacritics, and not as Qarshï, the Turkī version or Qarshī, the Persian transliteration. This reflects uncertainties about pronunciation, which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as today, could vary according to geographic, ethnic or social factors.

INTRODUCTION

Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur (1483-1530), is a figure of major significance in the political and literary history of the sixteenth century world. The founder of the Indo-Afghān state that evolved into the Mughal Empire, Bābur also wrote a sophisticated autobiography, distinguished by an unparalleled range of personal and political detail. It can still be argued whether his political or his literary legacy is more important. His descendants, after all, transformed his modest and largely unpacified territorial conquests into one of the world's great, pre-colonial Islamic empires, a state so wealthy that its name became synonymous in Europe with opulent display. Merely the act of Bābur's great-great-grandson, Shāh Jahān, in building the Tāj Mahal might be reason enough to remember Bābur, recount his life and recall his own highly refined aesthetic sense. Yet, in the very longue durée of recorded history Bābur's autobiography may have the greater or at least the more enduring influence. A work that seems preternaturally modern in its revelations of motive and open displays of emotion, the autobiography, along with a collection of engagingly personal verse, humanize both its author and also an entire civilization. However, it is misleading to think of Bābur's political and literary activities as distinct aspects of his career. Bābur probably would not have written the autobiography had he been a political failure, and almost nothing would be known about his tumultuous military and political history without the autobiography.

Viewed from the singular perspective of September 11, 2001, Bābur's life and writings are especially significant for what they reveal of an individual: a relentlessly ambitious, humorous, casually violent, articulate, heavy drinking, personally engaging, highly cultured Muslim who lived in three regions of contemporary interest: Central Asia, Afghanistan and India. Due to both his conquest and his literary legacy Bābur is a well-known figure in the world of Islamic scholarship and among both scholars and the public in all three regions. Unfortunately but quite understandably twenty-first century Uzbeks, Afghāns and Indians tend to view Bābur not so much as an individual but as an embodiment of an ideology or a dream. In Uzbekistan, where he was born, he is now a nationalist

icon, in Kabul where he long reigned and is buried, his name evokes nostalgic memories where his neglected and now damaged gravesite reminds inhabitants of better days and picnics on its beautiful hillside location, and in India Bābur is now reviled by many Hindu nationalists for building the mosque known as the Babri Masjid. Now destroyed, this building was seen by activists of the militant World Hindu Council and also by many members of the BJP, the Hindu nationalist political party, as a symbol of Muslim imperialism and repression. It is only one of the many ironies of Bābur's life and the modern perceptions of that life, that while Bābur was an observant Muslim he never mentions building a mosque or even praying in one. Instead, in narrating his life from the early days in the lush Ferghanah valley, far east of Samarqand, to its triumphal conclusion in India, he constantly and lovingly discusses the planning and construction of gardens, to which he gave such evocative names as: the Garden of Rest, the Gold-Scattering Garden, the Lotus Garden, and the Garden of the Eight Paradises. It is in these gardens he can be most frequently seen and, in many respects, most readily understood.

Biography is a genre devoted to the individual, and particularly in an age when religious and political stereotypes are evoked and misrepresented with alarming frequency, it is an important counterpoint to depersonalized structural analysis. As the French biographer and *Annales* historian Bernard Guenée writes when discussing these complementary forms of historical knowledge:

> The study of structures seemed to me to be irreplaceable. It illuminated the past with marvelous coherence. But it made everything too simple. And a biography enables one to take a first look at the overwhelming complexity of things. What is more the study of structures seemed to give too much prominence to necessity.... But "it is only through men that things happen." And the story of a life helps us to understand how fragile and uncertain the destiny of these men is.... A biography makes it possible to pay more attention to chance, to the event, to chronological sequence; it alone can give the historian a sense of the time through which people actually lived.[1]

Commenting on Guenée's argument, his fellow *Annaliste,* Jacques Le Goff, remarks: "Let me go further. The historian of structures

[1] Jacques Le Goff, "After *Annales*: the Life as history," *Times Literary Supplement* April 14-20, 1989, 394 and 405.

had become sated with abstractions and starved of concrete reality. He wanted to become a real historian, as described by Marc Bloch, one who, 'like the ogre in the fairly tale,' knew that 'when he smelled human flesh he was approaching his quarry.' That quarry was no longer 'man in society,' or humanity viewed collectively, it was the individual, a particular historical character."[2]

Bābur's literary legacy means that he can be discussed as an individual in ways and to a degree that is unique for his time and place. In fact, in prose and poetry he revealed more about himself as an individual than can be found in any text or collection of texts written by or about any other person in the Middle East, South Asia or East Asia in the sixteenth century or in previous eras. Nor did many Europeans produce comparable bodies of work for this or earlier periods.

Bābur has been the subject of many scholarly studies. His autobiography, originally written in the Central Asian Turkic dialect now commonly known as Chaghatay Turkish, was eventually translated into Persian at the Indian court of his grandson, Akbar (r. 1556-1605), in the late sixteenth century. Then following the British conquest of the subcontinent the work was also translated into English, when it was immediately recognized as an exceptional historical source. Since then the autobiography has also been translated into Russian, French, Uzbek and Japanese.[3] It has been mined for the information it contains and used as the basis for numerous biographies in English, French, Russian and Uzbek, as well as the source for an atmospheric historical novel in Uzbek titled *Babur, Starry Nights*.[4] Paralleling the scholarly study of Bābur's text has been the publication of research on a vast array of topics directly or indirectly connected with his life in Central Asia, Afghanistan

[2] Ibid., 394.

[3] The most important editions of the text for scholarly study are the nineteenth century English and French translations by John Leyden and William Erskine and Abel Pavet de Courteille, then Annette S. Beveridge's carefully edited, early twentieth century English translation based on a surviving Turkī text, Reşit Rahmeti Arat's "modern" Turkish translation with its valuable notes to Turkī etymologies and history, S. A. Azimdzhanova's edited Russian translation, W. M. Thackston's parallel edition of the Turkī and Persian texts and English translation, and most recently Eiji Mano's collated edition discussed below. These and other editions are listed in the bibliography.

[4] Available most readily in the Russian translation. See Pirimkul Kadyrov, *Babur: Zvezdnye Nochi* Yu. Surovtseva trans. (Moskva: Sovetskiī Pisatel', 1983).

and India. This scholarship has provided crucial new insights into Bābur's cultural, political and social milieu, making it far easier to understand and explain the implications of his prose and poetry than was possible in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Despite the voluminous popular and scholarly literature on Bābur, no critical biography of the man has previously been written in any language, largely because no reliable editions of his autobiography and poetry have been available until very recently. Most of all it is Eiji Mano's collated edition of the extant Chaghatay manuscripts of the autobiography, published only in 1995, that has made it possible to write a modern study of his life.[5] The work of half a lifetime, Professor Mano's text has enabled scholars to discuss Bābur, his cultural assumptions, political and social milieu with the greatest possible precision. Not only has Professor Mano published an impeccably edited text, but he has supplemented it with a concordance in which the entire vocabulary of the text is indexed.[6] Almost simultaneously the Turkish scholar, Bilal Yücel, collated numerous extant manuscripts of Bābur's largely Chaghatay poetry and published the first complete edition of Bābur's verse in Latin script.[7] While Soviet-era scholars, most notably I. V. Stebleva and S. A. Azimdzhanova, have written insightful specialized studies of Bābur's poems, no complete edition of his verse had previously been published.[8] The verse is used here only autobiographically, that is for the light it sheds on Bābur's life. A literary analysis of his poetry and its relation to the Turkī and Persian verse of his contemporaries and predecessors, a separate work of another lifetime, still awaits to be done. With Professor Yücel's publication such work is now possible.

This biography is largely written in the form of a commentary on Bābur's autobiography and poetry and it is done so for two interrelated reasons. First of all Bābur's prose and poetry are incomparable sources, not merely because they offer unique information about his life and era, but because they provide the only narrative line for his life. As Le Goff observes, "Historical biography must, at

[5] Eiji Mano ed., *Bābur-Nāma (Vaqāyiʿ)* (Kyoto: Syokado, 1995).
[6] Eiji Mano, *Bābur-Nāma (Vaqāyiʿ)* Concordance and Classified Indexes (Kyoto: Syokado, 1996).
[7] Bilāl Yücel, *Bābür Dīvānı* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1995).
[8] See among other works S. Azimdzhanova, *Indiīskiī Divan Babura* (Tashkent: "Fan", 1966) and I. V. Stebleva, *Semantika Gazelī Babura* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1982).

least to some extent, be a narrative, an account of someone's life; it is articulated around certain individual or collective events—a biography without events makes no sense...."[9] Unlike the case of later autobiographers such as Benjamin Franklin, Bābur's life was not recorded by a host of contemporary observers whose eyewitness accounts can be used together with the autobiography to synthesize an independent narrative of his life. Bābur is mentioned in the Persian narrative histories written both during and after his life. However, only the autobiographical accounts of his Mongol cousin, Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat (1499-1551), and his daughter, Gulbadan Begim, contain substantial personal information about him, and much of that is taken from Bābur's own autobiography.[10] The scarcity of information about Bābur in other historical sources is due to the fact that he spent most of his life as a minor figure on the fringes of the principal power centers in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India. Therefore, court historians paid relatively little attention to him or his career until he successfully invaded north India.

Several examples of the manner in which historians treat the places and events of Bābur's life may suffice to illustrate the centrality of his narrative and the relative poverty of other accounts as sources for his life. First, consider the degree to which court historians describe events in the Ferghanah valley, the appanage or territory east of Samarqand that Bābur inherited in 1494, when he was just under twelve years of age. S. Azimdzhanova has observed how little is recorded about the life of Bābur's father, ʿUmar Shaykh

[9] Le Goff, After *Annales*: the Life as history," 394.

[10] Mirza Haydar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* Persian text edited by W. M. Thackston, Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures No. 37 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University, 1996), and W. M. Thackston's English translation of the same text also in the series, Oriental Languages and Literatures no. 38 (1996). Two more fully annotated editions are the first edited English translation completed in 1897, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia,*, Being *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlāt* edited by N. Elias and translated by E. Denison Ross (London Curzon Press, repr. 1972), and the recent Russian edition by A. Urunbaev et al ed. and trans., *Ta'rikh-i Rashidi* (Tashkent: "Fan," 1996). See also V. V. Barthold, "The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haydar, Dughlāt. A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia," in V. V. Barthold, *Raboty Po Istochnikovedeniyu* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1973), 8, 63-73 and Eiji Mano, "An Attempt at a Critical Text of One Section of the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*," in Eiji Mano and Kazuyuki Kubo ed., *A Synthetical Study on Central Asian Culture in the Turco-Islamic Period* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1997), 6-25. Gulbadan Begim, *The History of Humāyūn* (*Humāyūn-Nāma*) Annette S. Beveridge trans. and ed. (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyāt-i Delli, repr. 1972).

Mīrzā, who had previously governed the valley. ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā, like his brothers, cousins and nephews who governed much of Central Asia at this time, was descended on his father's side from the Central Asian conqueror Tīmūr (d. 1405) and therefore he, like Bābur, is known to later historians as a Tīmūrid.

> Apart from Babur, none of the historians of the fifteenth century devote even a page to the rule of Omar Sheīkh in Ferghane. The Timurid court historians, Abdarrazzak Samarkandi, Mirkhond and Khondemir, were not interested in the lives of rulers of small appanages. These historians limited themselves to an enumeration of the existing *soyurghal* possessions [appanage grants] of their rightful owners. This is exactly how Abdarrazzak Samarkandi, the court historian of the later Timurids acts.... In these pages Abdarazzak gives a few lines to Omar Sheikh Mirzy [about his *soyurghal*].... In the works of Mirkhond and Khondemir—court historians of Sultan Husain [of Harat]—we also fail to find valuable information about the rule of Omar Sheikh.... the name of Omar Sheīkh is preserved in history only because his son was Babur.[11]

Azimdzhanova makes a similar point about the sources for her book *The State of Babur in Kabul and in India.*[12] In this work, in which the author gives a systematic survey of the extant materials available for Bābur's entire career, she remarks: "There is much material in the works of the pro-Timurid historians such as Khwandamir and Muhammad Haydar about the life and activities of Babur [in Kabul] which is borrowed from his memoirs. However, these historians are not able to reconstruct the gap of the period of his rule."[13] That is, Bābur's narrative of his life in eastern Afghanistan in the early sixteenth century is the first eyewitness or historical account of the region. Without his autobiography almost nothing would be known about Afghāns or events in this region for another century. Even coinage is lacking for Kabul during this period, a valuable source of economic, political and ideological data in better documented regions, especially Tīmūrid Mawarannahr. Considering Bābur's own publicized awareness of the importance of com-

[11] S. Azimdzhanova, *K Istorii Ferghany Vtoroī Poloviny XV v.* (Tashkent: "Nauka," 1966), 6.

[12] S. A. Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1977).

[13] Ibid., 13-14. See especially Chapter I: "Survey of Sources and Scientific Literature." The only extant sources Azimdzhanova fails to discuss are coinage and Bābur's poetry.

merce in the Kabul economy, coinage could shed critical light on his administrative and financial policies. However, while coin hoards are relatively plentiful for most Tīmūrid territories, they are completely lacking for eastern Afghanistan in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.[14] Therefore, due to a lack of both written and material evidence Azimdzhanova's study of Bābur's state in Kabul is by necessity abstracted primarily from his work. A similar point can and has also been made about the historiography of Bābur's years in India.[15]

Khwāndamīr, one of the Timurid court historians cited by Azimdzhanova, pays considerably more attention to Bābur's life than to that of Bābur's father, 'Umar Shaykh, for he revised sections of his massive history, *Habīb al-siyar,* after Bābur conquered North India.[16] The most accomplished Tīmūrid, Safavid Iranian and again in his later years, Tīmūrid court historian of the early sixteenth century, Khwāndamīr was a sophisticated member of the Muslim intelligentsia and a man whom Bābur patronized when he joined him in India in September, 1528. After Bābur's death in 1530 Khwāndamīr stayed on to serve Bābur's son, Humāyūn.[17] In his history he discusses Bābur's life at considerable length, but most of his information is taken directly from Bābur's autobiography, which he had access to after he arrived in India.[18] However, his

[14] See for example the many numismatic studies of Elena A. Davidovich, such as her analyses of the copper and silver coinage of the Tajikistan region, including the Mongol, Tīmūrid and Uzbek periods. *Klady Drevnikh i Srednevekovykh Monet Tadzhikistana* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1979). A few of Bābur's coins minted in Kabul after his victories in India have survived. See Charles J. Rodgers, *The Catalogue of the Coins*, Pt. I, *The Coins of the Mogul Emperors of India*, (Delhi: Inter-India Publications, repr. 1985), 1-4.

[15] Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "Babur's Relations with the Members of Afghan Nobility in India (1519-1530 A. D.)," *Islamic Culture* 12, 4 (October 1978), 241-61.

[16] Ghiyas al-Dīn b. Humām al-Dīn al-Husaynī Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād al-bashar* (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-yi Khayyām, 1954) 4 v. Khwāndamīr had completed his work earlier, but supplemented it with new information he acquired in India.

[17] He became a court historian for Humāyūn and died in India in 1535. For details of his life and numerous works see M. Hidayat Hosain ed., *Qānūn-i-Humāyūnī of Khwāndamīr* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1940), i-xxxvi.

[18] For a discussion of Khwāndamīr's use, of Bābur's memoirs see N. D. Miklukho-Maklaī, "Khondamir i 'Zapiski Bābura,'" *Tyurkololgicheskie Issledovaniya* (Moskva-Leningrad: "Nauka," 1963), 237-49. N. N. Tumanovich discusses Khwāndamīr and other late Tīmūrid and Safavid-era historians and sources in his work, *Gerat v XVI-XVII vekakh* (Moskva: "Nauka,"1989). See especially chapter I, "Sources and Historiographical Problems."

indebtedness to Bābur may not be at first apparent because Khwāndamīr writes highly Arabicized literary Persian rather than Bābur's simpler, more direct Chaghatay. This has the effect of presenting Bābur's information in a significantly distinct way that sometimes masks both his source and also the meaning of the original. Khwāndamīr's history is useful in supplementing Bābur's account, but principally as a source for regions, powers and events that are only marginally relevant to his life.

The relative lack of information about Bābur also characterizes the later history of Hasan-i Rūmlū, a member of the military/administrative class of mid-sixteenth century Safavid Iran. Hasan-i Rūmlū (b. 1530) mentions Bābur a number of times in the extant volume of his important history the *Ahsan al-tawārīkh.*[19] In two of the longer passages he describes Bābur's defeats by Uzbek troops following his second occupation of Samarqand in 1501 and eventual flight to Kabul in 1504, and later in the volume, his next loss to the same Uzbek forces following his third occupation of Samarqand in 1511-1512. In the first passage Hasan-i Rūmlū takes only a paragraph to summarize three years of Bābur's life that Bābur himself narrates in his typically detailed and emotionally compelling fashion over the course of many pages.[20] Due to its brevity and misleading precis of events, Hasan-i Rūmlū's brief account of this period in Bābur's life is worthless. Whatever his source for this information, the Iranian historian had little interest in and or knowledge of events that did not involve Iranian forces.

At least that is suggested by his much fuller account of Bābur's loss to the Uzbeks in 1512. At that time Bābur was allied with the Iranians, and Hasan-i Rūmlū gives a detailed account of their joint effort to counterattack against the Uzbeks after Bābur's defeat, a campaign that led to the death of the Iranian commander and Bābur's final expulsion from Central Asia. In this instance Hasan-i Rūmlū gives useful military information that supplements the narrative of Bābur's cousin Haydar Mīrzā, who also participated in this campaign.[21] He had access to earlier Persian accounts, most

[19] Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-tawārīkh* ʿAbd al-Husayn Navāʾī ed. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bābik, 1357/1978). Born in 937/1530/31, he completed his history in 980/1572/3.

[20] Ibid., 115.

[21] Ibid., 168-74.

particularly Khwāndamīr's history, although for these years his account is more detailed than that of his predecessor. The detail Hasan-i Rūmlū provides also suggests he had gathered eyewitness testimony. It is also worth noting that he, like such later Safavid historians as Iskandar Beg Munshī, treats Bābur and his descendants with great respect.[22] This is a noticeable feature of Safavid relations with Bābur's successors, even when the Iranians were actively battling with them for control of Qandahar, a perennial source of friction between the two states. Nonetheless, overall the *Ahsan al-tawārīkh* and other Safavid accounts only supplement Bābur's autobiography for brief, albeit important moments in his life.

An analogous argument about the tangential relevance of narrative historical sources for Bābur's life, may also be made about Uzbek histories, that is Persian-language histories written by historians who either enjoyed or sought the patronage of Uzbek rulers, who at the end of the fifteenth century, eradicated Tīmūrid power in Central Asia. As in the case of Khwāndamīr and Hasan-i Rūmlū, these Uzbek histories are modestly useful in supplementing Bābur's works, but they offer virtually no personal information. They are far more perfunctory in this regard than even Safavid sources. Nor do they enable modern historians to evaluate fairly Bābur's own caustic and highly prejudicial characterization of Shībānī Khan, the scourge of the Tīmūrids and the founder of Uzbek power. Two important examples of these histories are the contemporary account of Kamal al-Din ʿAlī Binā'ī (1451-1510), the *Shībānī-nāmah*, written in sometime after 1505, and the late sixteenth century account of Hāfiz-i Tanīsh ibn Mīr Muhammad Bukhārī (b. c. 956/1549), the *Sharaf-nāmah-i shāhī*, written in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

The *Shībānī-nāmah* is a history of Shībānī Khān from his birth through 1505 and includes the period of his first capture of Samarqand in 1500. It was later used by Khwāndamīr as a source for his own history of the Uzbeks and their conquest of Samarqand. The author's treatment of Bābur is limited to a brief reference to the grant of ʿUmar Shaykh's appanage and then a more protracted

[22] Eskander Beg Munshi, *History of Shah ʿAbbas the Great* (Tarīk-e ʿAlamāra-ye ʿAbbasī) Roger Savory trans. (Boulder, Colorado and New York, N.Y.: Westview Press and Biblioteca Persica, 1978 & 1986), 3 v.

account of Babur's relations with his cousin, Sultan ʿAlī Mīrzā, the nominal ruler of Samarqand before the Uzbeks took the city. It adds no significant information to Bābur's own account, other than stylized descriptions of the suffering of the general population.[23] The later *Sharaf-nāmah-i shāhī* is a more traditional history and covers the period of Bābur's last defeat by the Uzbeks in 1512.[24] However, the author's lengthy description of these events is taken from Haydar Mīrzā's first-hand account.[25] The Uzbek work that offers a new and intriguing perspective on Bābur is not really a history at all, but a text devoted to explaining the Islamic principles of government, the *Sulūk al-mulūk*, by Fazlullah ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī (Isfahānī), who also wrote a brief history of Shībānī Khan's campaigns. Khunjī, an Uzbek partisan and orthodox Sunni ʿ*alīm*, was outraged by Bābur's cynical profession of Shīʿī Islam in exchange for help from his Shīʿī Iranian allies in retaking Samarqand in 1511. Khunjī, who was as he says a "prisoner of heretics" in Samarqand when Bābur occupied the city, describes Bābur's final loss to Uzbek forces in 1512 and commemorates it with a poem that ridicules Bābur's defeat and flight and castigates his hypocrisy.[26]

Khwāndamīr, Hasan-i Rūmlū, Bināʾī and Hāfiz-i Tanīsh are four of the most important of many Persian-language authors whose works can be used to complement Bābur's narrative. However, apart from the fact that these historians only supplement his autobiography, there is also the question of the kind of information they provide. Typically such authors offer political and military narratives primarily devoted to their patrons, although the richness of their data and the literary quality of their texts vary enormously. As

[23] Kazuyuki Kubo ed., "Bināʾī, Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAlī, *Shaybānī-nāma*," in Eiji Mano ed., *A Synthetical Study on Central Asian Culture in the Turco-Islamic Period* (Kyoto: Ministry of Education, 1997), 65-7 & 1-93.

[24] Hāfiz-i Tanīsh ibn Mīr Muhammad Bukhārī, *Sharaf-nāma-ĭi shākhī*. M. A. Salakhedinova trans and ed. (Moskva: "Nauka," Chast' 1, 1983 & Chast' 2, 1989).

[25] Haydar Mīrzā's history is used almost word for word, with some critical omissions, *Sharaf-nāma-ĭi shākhī*, Chast' 1, 19 & 85-86.

[26] Fazlullah ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, *Sulūk al-mulūk* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khwarazmī, 1362/1983). Lines from the poem are quoted below, Chapter 4. Kunjī's other work, completed in 1509, in which Bābur is mentioned only briefly, is the *Mihmān-nāmah-yi Bukhārā* Manūchihr Sutūdeh ed. (Tehran: BTNK, 1354/1976). Kunjī alludes to Bābur's first attack on Q̱andahar on p. 184.

a result of their preoccupation with political and military events they provide little detailed information about the traits of individuals, whether their physical characteristics, personality or presumed motives. When they do discuss causes of events or the character or motives of individuals, their texts also must be treated with caution, as Peter Hardy warns in his seminal work on Persianate historiography, *Historians of Medieval India*.[27] Autobiographies such as Bābur's are often seen as problematic sources, but narrative historical accounts must be treated with equal if not even greater care. In any event when the accounts of these historians overlap with Bābur's autobiography their information tends to be only marginally useful. And however critical their sources may be for understanding specific events, taken together they do not provide even a tiny fraction of the material needed to construct an alternate narrative to that contained in Bābur's autobiography and in his poetry.

The second reason for writing this biography as a selective commentary on Bābur's own writings is that by following his narrative closely it is possible to appreciate and comment on his self-presentation, that is to critique his autobiographical intent. Understanding this intent is a crucial part of interpreting his life. This in turn raises the question of just how one approaches the autobiography and Bābur's poetry. What is so critical to remember is that Bābur's works are not self-explanatory. Quite the opposite is true. In fact the difficulty of reading his autobiography explains why most of the elegant, well-annotated and beautifully illustrated modern translations of the text usually have remained unread, decorating coffee tables or gathering dust in library shelves. His autobiography and poetry too, most of which is still not translated, require persistent, informed questioning to appreciate what he reveals of himself, to critique his self-presentation and to understand the implications of his elaborate, often numbingly detailed narrative for the social, cultural and political life of his era. In attempting to achieve these goals this biography is written in alternating thematic and narrative chapters. Of the thematic chapters two are devoted to studying the nature and significance of Bābur's principal writings—his autobiography and his poetry—and two others use material from his prose and poetry to examine his personality. Interspersed with these thematic chapters are four devoted to narrative, using and critically

[27] Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India* (London: Luzac, 1966).

evaluating his own account of himself and his society while carrying the story forward. Above all else these narrative chapters are meant to convey a sense of Bābur's humanity and to demonstrate better than any analytical summary can accomplish, the complexity of his life and the contingency of his career, Bernard Guenée's "fragile and uncertain" destiny.

Biographies are preoccupied with individuals, and it is a rare opportunity to be able to humanize a pre-modern Muslim of any social class. Yet in Bābur's case an exceptionally well-documented life also offers unique data for understanding the "structure" of politics in the interconnected Central Asian, Afghan and north Indian worlds of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. In his lifetime, though, the structure was more of an anti-structure, a decentralized, atomized political "system." That is, not only was Bābur a marginal figure throughout most of his career, but his era was a kind of chronological marginalia in the political history of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and India. It was the final moment in the transition phase from the steppe empires of the preceding centuries to the more highly structured and, to varying degrees, increasingly bureaucratic states of the early modern period. Harat, for example, the richest and most culturally vibrant Tīmūrid artifact of the late-fifteenth century, was essentially a city-state. The political fragmentation it represented was also reflected in the extremely modest military resources which its ruler and the rulers of other Tīmūrid city-states commanded. Bābur himself gives detailed evidence of this fundamental economic, political and military reality again and again in his autobiography, thus supplying the kind of specific data that is needed to identify the structures that Guenée and others admire—because they see them as sociological axioms that generate theorems or social explanations. However, it is not necessary to be a social theorist to appreciate the fundamental political realities of Bābur's day. The English novelist and essayist, E. M. Forster, demonstrated his own quite sophisticated, if quirky grasp of the late-Tīmūrid world when, in a review of the English translation of Bābur's memoirs, he wrote:

> At the time that Machiavelli was collecting materials for *The Prince*, a robber boy, sorely in need of advice, was scuttling over the highlands of Central Asia. His problem had already engaged the attention and sympathy of the Florentine; there were too many kings about and not enough kingdoms. Tamurlane and Gengis Khan (the boy

> was descended from both) had produced between them so numerous a progeny that a frightful congestion of royalties had resulted along the upper waters of the Jaxartes and the Oxus, and in Afghanistan. One could scarcely travel two miles without being held up by an Emperor. The boy had inherited Ferghana, a scrubby domain at the extreme north of the fashionable world; thinking Samarkand a suitable addition, he conquered it from an uncle when he was thirteen. Then Ferghana revolted, and while trying to subdue it he lost Samarkand, too, and was left with nothing at all. His affairs grew worse; steal as he might, others stole quicker, and at eighteen his mother made him marry—a tedious episode. He thought of escaping to China, so hopeless was the block of uncles and cousins, and aunts; poisoned coffee and fire-pencil thinned them out, but only for a moment; up they sprang, again he conquered, lost, conquered and lost forever Ferghana and Samarkand. Not until he was twenty-one and had taken to drink, did the true direction of his destiny appear; moving southward he annexed Kabul. Here the horizon expanded; the waters flowed southward again from Kabul, out of the Asian continent into the Indian; he followed them, he took Delhi, he founded the Mogul Empire, and then, not to spoil the perfect outline of his life, he died. Had Machiavelli ever heard of Babur? Probably not. But if the news had come through, how he would have delighted in a career that was not only successful but artistic![28]

Forster takes considerable literary license with Bābur's life, but otherwise offers a reasonable precis of political conditions in his Central Asian homeland. In his offhand allusion to Machiavelli he also, but apparently unintentionally, reminds his readers that political fragmentation is often the forcing bed of cultural florescence and creativity—as is suggested by both the Italian Renaissance and original Greek examples, and corroborated by the cases of Tīmūrid Harat and Samarqand.[29] And this is only one of many parallels between Italy and Central Asia that strike anyone familiar with both the Florentine, Sienese and Tīmūrid worlds in the late fifteenth century. These include the cultivation and refinement of aesthetic sensibility amidst a brutal life of constant political and social violence, and the open, unashamed egotism of individuals. And it is individuals who emerge most vividly from Bābur's writ-

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[28] E. M. Forster, "The Emperor Babur," in *Abinger Harvest* (London: Edward Arnold, repr. 1936), 292.

[29] An idea developed for the Tīmūrid case by Maria Eva Subtelny in her article, "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage Under the Later Timurids," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20 (1988), 479-505.

ings, not only Bābur himself, but also a constellation of distinct personalities. In this respect it is difficult to detect fundamental differences in these two distant societies, which in later centuries have been seen by so many to inhabit the contrasting and even fundamentally opposed European and Islamic worlds. For this moment at least their individuals seem a remarkably similar human type, the most fundamental historical structure of all.

CHAPTER ONE

EMPERORS AND INDIVIDUALS

هر کیم بو وقائع نی اوقور بیلکای کیم
نی رنج و نی محنت و نی غملار کوردوم

Everyone who reads these Events will know,
What grief and what sorrow and what difficulties I have seen.

Bābur in the *Rampūr Dīwān*
Agra, 28 December 1528[1]

The Turkic Emperors

On April 20, 1526 Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur defeated the Afghān ruler, Sultān Ibrāhīm Lūdī, at the battle of Panipat, just over fifty miles north of Delhi. With his victory he founded the state generally known as the Mughal Empire. Bābur, as he is usually known by the last word in his name meaning tiger or leopard, traced his lineage from two extraordinary Central Asian conquerors, Temür and Chinggis Qan.[2] On his father's side he was de-

[1] "Events" is capitalized in the translation of this poem as the word is the probable title of Bābur's autobiographical memoir. See below, n. 25. Bābur evidently intended this verse to be included in the finished text of the memoirs. However, it is not included in the extant and incomplete versions of the text.

[2] The name Bābur is evidently a variant of the Persian word *babr*, a leopard, tiger or other cat-like animal. The word appears repeatedly in Firdausi's eleventh century epic poem on Iranian kingship, the *Shāh nāmah*. Martti Räsänen suggests this identification in his book *Versuch Eines Etymologischen Wörterbuchs Der Türksprachen* (Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1969-71), I, 53 & 66. He identifies a Chaghatay Turkic word "babär" or "leopard" with a Yakut Turkic word "bābyr" or "babyr" meaning "tiger" found in a Russian-Yakut dictionary published in Petrograd between 1917 and 1930. He equates this word with the Persian "babr" and the Ottoman "bäbr." Räsänen also defines the Uighūr word *bar* or *bār* as Tiger, I, 63-4. This usage is presumably the origin of the names of some Mamlūks, the Turkic [Qipchaq] "slave" rulers of medieval Egypt between 1250 and 1518. The suffix "bars" occurs in several Mamlūk compound names, such as "Altï-bars" or "Six Tigers." See J. Sauvaget "Noms Et Surnoms De Mamelouks,"

scended in the fifth generation from the Turk, Temür, the Turkī word for "iron."[3] Due to an early leg wound Temür is known in most Persian-language sources as Tīmūr-i leng, Tīmūr the Lame or in common European parlance, Tamerlane (1336-1405).[4] On his mother's side Bābur was a fifteenth generation descendant of the Mongol Chinggis Qan or in Persian texts, Chingīz Khan (c.1167-1227).[5] More particularly he was descended from Chingīz Khan's second son, Chaghatay, once the ruler of the western Central Asian territories where Tīmūr later came to power.[6] However, since

Journal Asiatique, V. 238 (1950) p. 38 no. 29, p. 41 No. 49 & 50, p. 43 no. 65 and p. 51 no. 144. The old Turkic word for lion is *arslan* and for tiger, *qaplan*; both are also found in Ottoman Turkish. See V. M. Nadelyaev et al ed. *Drevnetyurkskiī Slovar'* (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1969), 55 & 421.

[3] The language spoken by Temür and his descendants is generally known as Turkī. In Europe it has been known since the nineteenth century as Chaghatay Turkish, that is the Turkic language or dialect spoken in the *ulus* or territories of Chinggis Qan's second son Chaghatay. In the twentieth century this language was known to the people of the Uzbek Soviet Republic and later independent state as "Old Uzbek." See Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, "On the Development of Literary Uzbek in the Last Fifty Years," *Central Asiatic Journal* 21 (1977), 36 n. 1. For an introduction to the language see János Eckmann, *Chagatay Manual,* Uralic and Altaic Series V. 60 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Publications, 1966), 1-13. Persian, however, was the lingua franca throughout Temür's western dominions and the dominant literary language in these territories throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

[4] For an introduction to Temür's career, especially his relations with Turco-Mongol tribes and the administration of his empire see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). H. R. Roemer summarizes Temür's career and history of his descendants, the Tīmūrids, in two articles, "Tīmūr in Iran," and "The Successors of Tīmūr," in CHIr. Vol. 6, pp. 42-146. Other articles in this volume survey religion, literature and architecture in Iran during the period of Temür and his successors. Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry have coauthored an intelligent, splendidly illustrated survey of the Tīmūrid arts, *Tīmūr and the Princely Vision, Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1989).

[5] The Persianized variants of these names will be used throughout the remainder of this text. Thus, Chinggis Qan will be rendered Chingīz Khan and Temür as Tīmūr. Likewise the Uzbek leader, Shaybaq or Shibaq Khan will be given as Shībānī Khan. The Mongols will either be identified as such or by the variant of their name commonly used by Turks at this time, *Mughul.* For the latter see Igor De Rachewiltz, "The Name of Mongols in Asia and Europe: A reappraisal.," *Études Mongoles Et Sibériennes* 27 (1996), 199-205.

[6] The Mongol view of Chingīz Khān's origins is contained in the Mongol verse epic adapted by Paul Kahn from the English translation of Francis Woodman Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984). The best scholarly introduction to Chingīz Khan's career is the well-illustrated study by Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan, His Life and Legacy* Thomas Nivison

patrilineal descent determined social and dynastic identity in Central Asia, Bābur thought of himself first as a Tīmūrid and a Turk, and those are two terms he uses to identify his own lineage. Yet his status as a matrilineal descendant of Chingīz Khan was nearly as important to him as his Tīmūrid identity. He favored both Tīmūrids and Chaghatay Mongols in his inner circle, appointed both to command positions in his armies and married two of his daughters to Chaghatay Mongols just before his death in India in 1530. Indeed, in sixteenth century sources and some later ones as well, his dynasty is often identified as Chaghatay.[7] It is for this reason the hyphenated title Tīmūrid-Mughul is the most meaningful name for the dynasty he founded in India, and the title that will be used throughout this book.[8]

Bābur was the fourth Turkic-speaking Muslim ruler in a century to establish a major state in the enormous swath of territory extending from the Middle East through Iran to western Central Asia and including also India or South Asia. He represented the culmination of a process of Turkification that had begun in this vast region in the tenth century. His three predecessors founded states whose rulers directly or indirectly influenced Bābur's career and

Haining trans. and ed. (Oxford: Blackwells, repr. 1996). Rashīd al-Dīn Tabīb, the Iranian polymath scholar and minister to the Il-Khans, the Mongol rulers of Iran in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, summarizes the career of Chingīz Khan's second son Chaghatay. See John Andrew Boyle trans., *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1971), 135-56.

[7] Tīmūr himself married a Chaghatay Mongol wife to give himself a Mongol kinship connection, an all important connection in Central Asia of this period. It was this marriage that allowed him to take the title *kürgen*, or Mongol/Chingīzid son-in-law. See Roemer, "Tīmūr in Iran," in CHIr l, 6, p. 45. This title and his conquest of the western Chaghatay lands meant that Bābur even on his paternal Tīmūrid or Turkic side also had an important Chaghatay connection. No wonder then his Mongol cousin, the historian Haydar Mīrzā and other sixteenth century writers often refer to Bābur's family as Chaghatays. Rūzbihān Khunjī identifies Bābur as "Pādshāh Bābur b. ʿUmar Shaykh Chaghatay." *Sulūk al-mulūk*, 50. Most of Tīmūr's coins were struck in the names of his nominal Chaghatay overlords, at least until the last year of his life. R. E. Darley-Doran, "Tīmūrids," "Numismatics," EI2, 10, 525. A number of modern historians, including Roemer cited above, also refer to Tīmūr's own state as a Chaghatay kingdom.

[8] Tīmūrid-Mughul is also used here for the practical reason that Mughal/Mughul has been almost universally used as the name for Bābur's dynasty in European language publications. The other name sometimes used for Bābur's dynasty is Indo-Tīmūrid. This is strictly accurate but doesn't allude to the Chaghatay connection. Mughal is the more common spelling of the word that is more accurately represented as Mughul.

those of his descendants. These founders were Mehmet II, the Conqueror (1432-1481), a descendant of Turkic tribal leader Osman, who took Constantinople, later Istanbul, in May 1453; Shah Ismāʿīl Safavī (1487-1524), a Turkic-speaking leader of a largely Turkic tribal confederation who occupied Tabriz in 1501 and the most of the Iranian plateau a decade later, and Shībānī Khan (1451-1510), the Chingīzid leader of the largely Turkic Özbek or Uzbek tribal confederation that defeated Bābur and expelled him from Samarqand in 1501. The founders of all four states had a great deal in common. Not only were they all Muslims and ethnically or culturally Turks or Turkicized Mongols, but they also shared a respect for Tīmūrid and Chingīzid political legitimacy, and they all valued Persian as the prestigious lingua franca and dominant literary culture of the eastern Islamic world.[9] The states they founded were also closely linked by trade and by the circulation of literary, scientific and religious elites. Yet, in many other respects these rulers and their empires were also profoundly different.

Mehmet the Conqueror established the Osmanlï or Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, an empire that had earlier established its authority in Anatolia and areas of the Balkans.[10] The evolution of this state that was to become the longest-lived Muslim empire of all time, represented the culmination of the prolonged confrontation between Turkic tribal groups and forces of the eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. By the fourteenth century the most successful of these tribal fighters had coalesced into a group of emirates or small states, initially deriving most of their political and cultural traditions from the Saljuq Turks, who had ruled Iran and parts of

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[9] The one ruler whose family ethnic or racial background is not well known is Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī. However, there is no doubt of his Turkic dynastic and cultural identity. He thought of himself as a successor to the Aq Quyunlu Turkic dynasty of northwestern Iran and gathered most of his supporters from this region and from eastern Anatolia. For the Aq Quyunlu see John Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: clan, confederation and empire*: *a study in 15th/9th century Turko-Iranian politics* (Minneapolis: Biblioteca Islamica, 1976). Shāh Ismāʿīl also wrote in a Turkic dialect generally identified as a precursor of Azerī, the modern Turkic dialect/language of both Iranian and independent Azerbaijan.

[10] The standard biography is Franz Babinger's, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* William Hickman ed. and Ralph Manheim trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). Halil Inalcik discusses the formative and "golden" age of the empire in his authoritative account, *The Ottoman Empire, The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, repr. 2000).

eastern Anatolia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.[11] When Mehmet inherited control of the rapidly expanding Ottoman emirate in 1451 he took control of a Sunni Muslim state whose leaders saw themselves not merely as descendants of Osman, but also as *ghāzī*s, heroic warriors for the faith, who since the mid-fourteenth century had fought on the Byzantine-Christian frontier.[12] Later Ottoman sultāns continued to legitimize their rule not merely by invoking their Turkic past, which as they knew was embarrassingly modest when compared with Tīmūrids and Chingīzids, but portrayed themselves as protectors of Sunni Islam.[13] This latter aspect of their imperial ideology acquired greater significance following their defeat of the Mamlūk sultān of Egypt in 1516 and occupation of Mecca in the following year. It had already been sharpened by their conflict with the Shīʿī Muslim Safavids, who rose to power on their eastern flank in the late fifteenth century.

When Ismāʿīl Safavī captured the important northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz in 1501 he founded a state fundamentally different from the Ottomans, Uzbeks and Tīmūrid-Mughuls.[14] There were some similarities. While his paternal ancestors may have been either Iranian or Kurdish, Ismāʿīl wrote in a Turkic dialect, and in political terms he saw himself as the successor to a Turkic ruling lineage, in his case the Aq Quyunlu Turks.[15] He was the maternal grandson of Uzun Hasan, the Aq Quyunlu ruler of

[11] C. E. Bosworth, "Saldljūkids," EI2, 8, 936-59.

[12] The classic exposition of this thesis of Ottoman *ghāzī* origins is Paul Wittek's work, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938). A recent restatement and revision of the thesis is by Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[13] Cornell H. Fleischer discusses Ottoman self-consciousness about their lack of a prestigious Tīmūrid or Chingīzid imperial tradition in his book *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire, The Historian Mustafa Ali* (1541-1600) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 290 passim. See also his later article in which he analyzes the creation of Süleyman's complex ideology of legitimacy. "Soliman Le Magnifique Et Son Temps," *Rencontres De L'École Du Louvre* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159-77.

[14] For a brief introduction to the dynasty see R. M. Savory, "Safawids," EI2, 8, 765-74 and H. R. Roemer, "The Safavid Period," in CHIr 6, 189-350. Other chapters in this latter volume survey Safavid religion, economics and literature.

[15] See Woods, *The Aqquyunlu...*, cited above n. 6. Vladimir Minorsky says of the Safavids that "Not improperly the early Safavid state may be considered as the third stage of the Turcoman domination in Persia." *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk* (Cambridge: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, repr. 1980), 30.

northwestern Iran and eastern Anatolia. Then too, apart from his Islamic faith and Turkic culture, Ismāʿīl resembled the early Ottomans in that he also grew up in an area near a Christian frontier, for him the Caucuses, where the *ghazā* was a fact of life. Yet, Ismāʿīl was neither the leader of a tribal dynasty like the Ottomans nor a ruler with a Chingīzid or Tīmūrid lineage, like the Uzbeks and Tīmūrid-Mughuls. Nor was he a Sunni Muslim, as were the Ottomans, Uzbeks and Tīmūrid-Mughuls. He was, rather, the messianic religious head of a militarized sūfī order, a devotional or mystical order known as the Safavī, which in the latter half of the fifteenth century had become Shīʿī Muslim as well.

These dual sūfī and Shīʿī elements of his religious identity comprised the principal sources of Ismāʿīl's legitimacy, although a century later Safavid historians fabricated a tenuous Tīmūrid link for the dynasty in a transparent attempt to compensate for his modest matrilineal Aq Quyunlu connections.[16] As a *pīr* or *shaykh*, that is the spiritual head of the family order, he articulated the religious autocracy common to sūfī orders. Then as a Shīʿī he also saw himself as a representative of the last earthly Imām, a line of Muslims descended from the Prophet Muhammad whose lineage, they believed, gave them unique spiritual insight into the esoteric meaning of the Quran and, therefore, elite political status in the Islamic world. Ismāʿīl combined these elements in his millenarian religious appeal to the largely Turkic tribes of eastern Anatolia and northwestern Iran.[17] Gradually he established himself as a charismatic leader of this predominantly Turkic confederation, and founded a state that imposed Shīʿī Islam over the hitherto largely

[16] As described by Sholeh Alysia Quinn in her book, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah ʿAbbas: Ideology, Imitation and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles* (Salt Lake City, Utah: The University of Utah Press, 2000). See especially her section, "Tīmūrid Legitimacy: The Safavid Shaykhs and Connections with Tīmūr," 86-89.

[17] Shāh Ismāʿīl's Azerbaijānī Turkish poetry provides some of the best insights into his eccentric and complex religious ideology that later became institutionalized in quite a different and essentially more orthodox variant as the state religion in Safavid Iran. See Vladimir Minorsky's translation, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismāʿīl I," in *Medieval Iran and its Neighbours* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982), 1006a-1053a. Said Amir Arjomand gives an excellent introduction to Safavid Shīʿī ideology, the religious and political elements of Safavid dynastic legitimacy and the evolution of the Shīʿī *ʿulamā* or clerical class during and after the Safavid era. See his book *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, repr. 1987).

Sunni population of the Iranian plateau. In ethnic terms this population was comprised primarily of Iranians and Turks. While Aq Quyunlu leaders had thought of themselves in some degree as rulers in Iran, it was an accident of geography and the presence of powerful states on their periphery that made the Safavids rulers over the historic land of Iran.[18] Then gradually the enormous influence of Persian bureaucrats, literati and a substantial Persian-speaking population gradually transformed the Safavid state into the culturally Persian Shīʿī kingdom of Ismāʿīl's descendants.

In northeastern Iran the expanding Safavid state almost immediately came into conflict with the strongly Sunni Özbek or Uzbek tribal confederation that had already usurped Tīmūrid control of Mawarannahr, the land beyond the Amu Darya river known in European sources as Transoxiana.[19] While the confederation was composed largely of Turks, it was led by the Chingīzid Shībānī Khan, who is reported to have said of himself, "...through me the dying house of Chingis flares up again....when I breeze by...like the morning wind, the candle of Tīmūr goes out as I pass."[20] Shībānī led one of the successor dynasties to the Mongol Golden Horde, originally the *ulus* or hereditary territory of Chingīz Khan's oldest son Jöchi, located on the steppe in the Volga-Ural region and including part of western Turkistan.[21] Already in the mid-fifteenth century Uzbeks had expanded into western areas of the Tīmūrid's Central Asian borderlands and had involved themselves in the perennial succession disputes of Tīmūr's descendants. By the time

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[18] The Aq Quyunlu had used the title *Pādshāh-i Irān*, even though they controlled only the northwestern region of the Iranian plateau. See Roemer, CHIr, 6, 339. Many of the various titles used by Safavid administrators are summarized by Roger Savory, "The Safavid State and Polity," *Iranian Studies*, 7, Nos. 1-2, (Winter-Spring 1974), 179-216.

[19] An abbreviated version of the Arabic phrase more completely rendered as *mā warā'u'n-nahr*, that which is beyond or behind the river Oxus or Amu Darya, the river that defines part of the modern boundary between Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

[20] Quoted by András J. E. Bodrogligeti, *A Grammar of Chagatay* (München: Lincome Europa, 2001), frontispiece. For an introduction to Shībānī Khān see R. D. McChesney, "Shībānī Khān" in EI2, 9, 426-28.

[21] The history of the Golden Horde and the evolution of the Özbek or Uzbek Khanate is discussed by Devin DeWeese in his book about the Muslim conversion of this Turco-Mongol population. See *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde, Baba Ükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

of Bābur's birth in 1483 they posed a serious threat to Tīmūrid control of the oasis cities of Bukhara and Samarqand. Then in 1501 they not only drove Bābur from Tīmūr's capital, but three years later chased him from the region, forcing him to take refuge in the former Tīmūrid appanage of Kabul in 1504. By 1507 Shībānī Khan had also occupied Harat, expelling or killing the remaining Tīmūrids in Khurasan. Subsequently the Uzbeks remained a real and immediate threat both to the Safavid control of northeastern Iran or Khurasan, and to Tīmūrid-Mughul rule in northern Afghanistan, sometimes even threatening Kabul. Uzbek campaigns or raids continued to pose a serious problem for both the Safavid and Tīmūrid-Mughul dynasties for more than a century after Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī killed Shībānī Khan in battle in 1510.[22] Uzbek appanages continued to control most of Mawarannahr down to the period of Russian imperial expansion into the region in the mid-nineteenth century.

Among the four rulers who founded these dynasties Bābur was partly distinguished by his splendid Tīmūrid-Mughul genealogy. That lineage never impressed the Chingīzid Shībānī Khan, although the Uzbek Khan made as many marital alliances as possible with both the Tīmūrid and Chaghatay branches of Bābur's family.[23] However, what sets Bābur apart from his three predecessors and contemporaries more than anything else is that he bequeathed not only an empire to his descendants but a human face to posterity. Neither Mehmet the Conqueror nor Shāh Ismāʿīl nor Shībānī Khan left behind significant evidence of their personal or emotional lives, apart from implicit evidence of their political ambition. The lack of such information is reflected in the modern historical accounts of these rulers. Only Mehmet is the subject of a substantial biography and in his brief chapter titled "The Ruler and the Man," its author, Franz Babinger, observes of Mehmet, "What makes an unbiased appraisal of Mehmet II so exceedingly difficult

[22] Martin B. Dickson discusses Uzbek relations with the Safavids during the reign of Shāh Ismāʿīl's successor Tahmasp in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "Shāh Tahmasp and the Uzbeks," Princeton University, 1958. Robert D. McChesney lucidly describes the nature of the Uzbek state in the course of examining the history of an important Muslim shrine in Balkh in his book, *Waqf in Central Asia, Four Hundred Years of a Muslim Shrine,* 1480-1889 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[23] Maria Eva Subtelny, "Bābur's Rival Relations: A Study of Kinship and Conflict in the 15th-16th Century Central Asia," *Der Islam* 66, 1 (1989), 102-118.

is the absence of reliable documentation concerning his personality."[24] Even less is known of the inner lives or personalities of Shāh Ismāʿīl and Shībānī Khan. In contrast Bābur's life is more fully documented than any ruler in the pre-colonial Islamic world. This knowledge is based largely on his remarkable autobiographical memoir. Known simply as the *Vaqāʾiʿ* or *Events*, this work not only humanizes Bābur but is the single most valuable source for understanding late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Tīmūrid society, as well as Afghanistan and north India in the early sixteenth century. No other contemporary source exists that is remotely comparable. It is the basis for all scholarship on Bābur, and a knowledge of its character and contents is a prerequisite for studying both the man and the eastern Islamic world in which he struggled for personal recognition and imperial power.

Bābur's Autobiography

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Bābur's autobiographical memoir, the *Vaqāʾiʿ*.[25] First of all there is just the size of the text, over six hundred pages in the most recent printed Turkī edition, even with fifteen years of the narrative missing.[26] Far more important than the size of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*, though, is its character and scope. At one level it is merely an exceptionally detailed political and military history of Mawarannahr, Afghanistan and north India. Yet in it Bābur transcended the narrative and historical genres of

[24] Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, p. 410. Ghulām Sarwar's, *History of Shāh Ismāʿīl Safawī* (Aligarh, India: Published by the Author, 1939) is largely a chronology of his career. The author doesn't pretend to be writing a biography.

[25] Bābur's work is usually known as the *Bābur-nāmah*, literally "Bābur's book," but there is little doubt that *Vaqāʾiʿ* or "Events" was his intended title for the entire work, as the word is the heading for each dated chapter, i.e. the "Events of the Year 1526." Bābur's descendants knew it under a variant of this title as "*Vāqiʿāt-i Bāburī*—a Turkī book written by his majesty himself." AN, I, 234. *Vaqāʾiʿ* and *Vāqiʿāt* are plural variants of the same Arabic root. The work was translated from Turkī to Persian at the Tīmūrid-Mughul court in 1589. AN, III, 862 and n. 4. *Vaqāʾiʿ* is the title used throughout the remainder of this work.

[26] This is the splendid, definitive edition produced by Professor Eiji Mano of Kyoto University that is supplemented by the author's concordance and classified indices. See the *Bābur-Nāma (Vaqāyiʿ)* Critical Edition based Upon Four Chaghatay Texts with Introduction and Notes (Kyoto: Syokado, 1995), and *Bābur-Nama* (*Vaqāyiʿ*) Concordance and Classified Indexes (Kyoto: Syokado, 1996). This is the edition cited throughout this work.

his culture to produce a retrospective self-portrait of the kind that is usually associated with the most stylishly effective European and American autobiographies. No other author in the pre-colonial literary history of the Islamic world—or in pre-colonial India or China—offers a comparable autobiographical memoir, a seemingly ingenuous first-person narrative enlivened by self-criticism as well as self-dramatization and the evocation of universally recognizable human emotions.[27] Not only does Bābur make himself seem engaging and personally approachable to modern readers, he also creates a three dimensional picture of his world otherwise known mainly from traditional, stylized political narratives and dazzlingly colorful but still two dimensional miniature paintings. No other monarch in pre-modern times—or really from any period—has made such a wealth of piquant observations on diverse subjects: verbal portraits of quirky contemporaries, realistic descriptions of the chaos of battle, pointed literary and artistic critiques, and a naturalist's precise description of the environment. Nor have many pre-modern autobiographers or even professional historians exhibited Bābur's taste for quantification, a trait some associate with modernity and the rise of the West in post-Renaissance times. It is, therefore, legitimate to say of Bābur's work for Asia what John Pope-Hennessy has said about the European significance of the *Vita* or "Life" of the Renaissance goldsmith and sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, that it is "the most revealing personal document of the sixteenth century."[28]

From the moment when nineteenth century English scholar-administrators discovered Bābur's *Vaqā'i'*, first in an incomplete Turkī original and then later in Persian translation, they recognized it as a work of exceptional human vitality and a treasure trove of social, cultural and political information. One such man, the judicial officer and Persian scholar Henry Beveridge, said of Bābur in 1887, "His autobiography is one of those priceless records which

[27] This includes Jonathan Spence's, *The Emperor of China*: *self-portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1975). This is not, however, a true autobiography but a collection of telling autobiographical remarks and stories collected by the author and translator.

[28] John Pope-Hennessy ed., *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini, Written by Himself* John Addington Symonds trans. (London: Phaidon Press, repr. 1995), ix. The most complete and stimulating study of Cellini in English is by Dino S. Cervigni, *The "Vita" of Benvenuto Cellini* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1979).

are for all time, and is fit to rank with the confessions of St. Augustine and Rousseau, and the memoirs of Gibbon and Newton. In Asia it stands almost alone."[29] Their pleasure, even astonishment, at discovering such a work in Asia has been universally echoed by later readers. In the twentieth century these reactions are typified by E. M. Forster and Jean-Paul Roux, the French Turcologist and biographer of Bābur. Forster, the author of *The Passage to India*, wrote enthusiastically of Bābur's work and the man it reveals. "Fresh, yet mature, the *Memoirs* leave an ambiguous and exquisite impression behind. We are admitted into the writer's inmost confidence....And since to his honesty, energy and sensitiveness, Bābur added a warm heart... the reader may discover a companion uncommon among the dead and amongst kings.... nothing...need hinder the modern man if he cares to come."[30] Forster's enthusiastic response to the *Vaqā'i'*, his delight at the accessibility of the author and the seeming modernity of the text, was precisely echoed more than a half-century later by Roux, who justifies his decision to write a biography of Bābur by remarking:

> Why Bābur? Because his literary works deliver to us everything, with his qualities and faults, especially his daily inner self, in his most casual moods, in his most profound thoughts, which often could have been our own.[31]

Both men essentially reiterate the more soberly expressed view of Annette Susannah Beveridge, whose edited translation of the original Turkī text Forster was reviewing when he made his comments. As she remarks in her introduction, "...what has kept interest in it alive through some four centuries is the autobiographical presentment of an arresting personality its whole manner, style and diction produce."[32]

Almost no one who has read the *Vaqā'i'* has failed to be charmed by its author. It is almost as if in writing Bābur took the advice he

[29] Quoted by Stanley Lane Poole, *Bābar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 12.

[30] Forster, "The Emperor Bābur," 294.

[31] Jean-Paul Roux, *Histoire des Grands Mogols, BABUR* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 19.

[32] BN-B, lviii. The wife of Henry Beveridge and the mother of William Beveridge, the architect of the British Labour Party's social welfare program, Annette Susannah Beveridge was a self-taught Persian and Turkī scholar. For details of her equally compelling life see M. A. Scherer, "Annette Akroyd Beveridge: Victorian Reformer, Oriental Scholar," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1995.

offers his readers when he pointedly remarks that one of his cousins was certain to be remembered as a coward for failing to join an alliance against the Uzbek confederation, the tribal coalition that in 1504 forced Bābur from his Central Asian homeland, and by 1506 was threatening to destroy him, his cousin and their few surviving Tīmūrid and Chingīzid relations. How could anyone of intelligence, Bābur remarks, fail to consider his posthumous reputation. After all, "a person's acts outlive him.... Wise men have called an illustrious name a second life."[33] As Forster and Roux show by their delighted reaction to the *Vaqā'i'*, Bābur has enjoyed a spectacularly successful second life. His success in defining himself for posterity may also be measured by the attention given to his text, and to a much lesser degree his poetry and other writings. Not only has the *Vaqā'i'* been translated into at least six languages, in the late twentieth century it was again published but in new, lavishly illustrated French and English editions.[34]

Bābur's success at defining himself for posterity may also be measured by another, ironic standard, the largely uncritical reception of the *Vaqā'i'*. Apart from Annette Susannah Beveridge, who almost alone among scholars of Bābur's writings succeeds in maintaining her critical distance, most editors and translators of the *Vaqā'i'* and writers who have used the text to discuss the history of the era or to compile biographies, have been seduced by the charms of the work.[35] They revel in their delight at discovering such an unexpected treasure and have largely taken it at face value, mining its pages for Bābur's wonderfully pithy observations or for "factual" information about the culture and society of the period.[36] Like other readers of effective autobiographies, both casual readers and sophisticated scholars have been "won over... by being admitted to his [Bābur's] intimacy."[37] In fact, nearly all readers of the

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[33] BN-M, f. 185b. Bābur renders the saying in Persian, undoubtedly quoting a Persian verse. See below Chapter 3 for a discussion of his use of Persian aphorisms.

[34] These two recent illustrated editions are by J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont and Wheeler M. Thackston.

[35] The principal exception being S. A. Azimdzhanova, whose two important works are cited in the Introduction.

[36] Bābur's work has largely been used in the uncritical way that earlier characterized the citation of material from medieval Indo-Persian histories. See Peter Hardy's insightful historiographical analysis, *Historians of Medieval India*.

[37] Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1960), 1.

Vaqā'i' have become Bābur's literary *nadīms*, his intellectual "boon companions," his posthumous friends and partisans. As a result while Bābur's work is widely known and frequently quoted, it cannot be said to be well-understood or appreciated beyond a superficial level. In consequence, with the sole exception of Jean-Paul Roux's work, the many biographies that have appeared are little more than precis of the original text.[38] Then too, in the continuing enthusiasm for the *Vaqā'i'* the significance of Bābur's poetry, much of it also autobiographical in different and important ways, has been almost totally ignored.

It is one of the great ironies of historical and literary scholarship on Bābur that while his *Vaqā'i'* is widely recognized as an autobiographical text that resembles many classic western examples of the genre, the significance of that perception in both the Islamic and broader literary world has been largely overlooked. First, most of those who write about the work usually suggest that it is either the earliest or the sole pre-modern autobiography in the Islamic world. Yet, as an autobiographical memoir the *Vaqā'i'* is not unique. An autobiographical tradition was every bit as much a part of Islamic civilization as it was in the Mediterranean and western European world. Bābur's work stands out not because it was the first such work written by a Muslim, but because it was so qualitatively superior to earlier autobiographical memoirs in virtually every respect. Second, the complexities of the work have never been discussed, for it is not only a autobiographical memoir but also a legitimizing narrative, an administrative survey and an unusual example of the genre of "mirror for princes" advice literature. However, the most inexplicable aspect of the voluminous scholarship on the work is this: the implication of identifying the work as an autobiography has never been seriously discussed. In their enthusiasm for the *Vaqā'i'* readers have largely ignored the essential character of autobiography, that it is pre-eminently what the *Annales* historian Marc Bloch identified as an intentional source, a rhetorical self-statement, in this case a consciously crafted, retrospective presentation of a life.[39] Like every other autobiographical work Bābur's is at least in part a self-serving piece of propaganda. Fortunately it is a brilliantly original example of the genre—and a great deal more.

[38] Roux, an accomplished Turcological scholar, is the only biographer to frame his life of Bābur within a discussion of Tīmūrid society and culture.

[39] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1953), 60.

Autobiography in the Islamic World

A significant autobiographical tradition existed in the pre-colonial Islamic world, and it is important to understand the characteristics of extant autobiographical works written by Muslims in order to appreciate both the nature and originality of Bābur's text. Autobiographical works were written in pre-modern or pre-colonial Islamic societies just as they were in Christian or Jewish communities in the Mediterranean and in Europe.[40] Indeed, if autobiography is simply defined as a retrospective presentation of one's own life, then there is good reason to think they were at least as common in the medieval Islamic world as they were in Europe of the same period.[41] Some Middle Eastern autobiographies were inspired by Greek or

[40] See the seminal article of Franz Rosenthal, "Die arabische Autobiographie," *Studia Arabica* 1 [Analecta *Orientalia*], 14 (1937), 1-40, the essay by M. J. L. Young "Medieval Arabic Autobiography," in M. L. J. Young, J. D. Latham and R. B. Serjeant, *Religion, Learning and Science in the ʿAbbasid Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 183-87, and the important recent discussion of Arabic autobiography by Dwight F. Reynolds and others in *Edebiyāt* 7 (1997), 207-393. See especially Reynolds introductory essay, "Introduction: Arabic Autobiography," 208-14. Dwight Reynolds and his colleagues have identified seventy autobiographical texts dating between the ninth and nineteenth century written in the "Arab" world and adjacent territories by Arabs, Armenians, Berbers, Iranians. Turks and West Africans. Reynolds, 208. Reynolds has also edited the expanded version of his essay in the volume, *Interpreting the Self, Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For Arabic autobiography see also Sergei E. Shuishki, "Some Observations on Modern Arabic Autobiography," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 13 (1982), 111-23, and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Blindness and Autobiography: al-Ayyām of Tāhā Husayn* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Cemal Kafadar discusses some Ottoman examples in his article "Self and Others: the Diary of a dervish in seventeenth century Istanbul and first-person narratives in Ottoman literature," *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989), 121-70, while Bert Fragner describes the Iranian tradition in *Persische Memoirenliterateur als Quelle zur Neuren Geschichte Irans* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979). For autobiographical and biographical literature of the Tīmūrid period see Maria E. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt,' in Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agius eds., *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* (Toronto: 1984), 137-55. Two Persian-language examples from seventeenth century Iran and eighteenth century India are discussed and translated by Devin J. Stewart, "The Humor of Scholars: The Autobiography of Niʿmat Allah al-Jazāʾirī (d. 1112/1701)," *Iranian Studies* 22, 4 (1989), 47-81 and by C. M. Naim ed. and trans., *Zikr-i Mir* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[41] This definition is adopted by Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 30. The estimate of the number of autobiographies in the "medieval" Islamic world relative to Christian Europe is based on a comment of Georg Misch, *Geschichte de Autobiographie* (Bern and Frankfurt: A. Francke and Gerhard Schultke-Bulmke, 1949-69),

Iranian examples, but most were written solely within an Islamic—or Islamized Arab, Persian or Turkic—context. The medieval Muslim theologian al-Ghazālī (d.1111), wrote one as did the fourteenth century philosophical historian, Ibn Khaldūn (d.1406).[42] However, neither al-Ghazālī nor Ibn Khaldūn consciously or incidentally convey a sense of themselves as distinct personalities or idiosyncratic human beings. The same can be said for most of the authors of earlier extant works. The overwhelming majority of these writers are concerned with external events and their texts usually represent little more "than an extended *curriculum vitae*."[43] An example of a typical but exceptionally significant pre-modern professional Muslim autobiography is Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) brief account of his religious, scientific and philosophical education in Bukhara and Khurasan in the tenth and eleventh century.[44] Apart from information about his birth it contains almost no personal information about this scientist and scholar.

Neither in the Islamic world nor in India were people of Bābur's era encouraged to write highly personal autobiographies. Even in Europe the widespread taste for literary self-indulgence comes very late with the Romantic movement. Rousseau's *Confessions* were published posthumously at the beginning of that period, and it was only then that Cellini's *Vita* came to be widely appreciated. However, in all cultures different occupational groups or social classes had distinct attitudes toward public and/or literary displays of egotism. In the Islamic world to which Bābur belonged the ex-

III. 2, 980, cited in Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 22. Misch, however, like most Eurocentric writers who discuss autobiography in the Islamic world, felt that however numerous, Muslim autobiographies were not the equivalent of European works. Misch, indeed, felt that Muslim works reflected an "arrested state of human consciousness."

[42] For al-Ghazālī's spiritual reflections see W. Montgomery Watt trans., *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī* (Oxford: One World Publications, repr. 1994). Ibn Khaldun's autobiography is discussed by Walter Joseph Fischel in *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus*, A.D.1401 (803). A study based on Arabic Manuscripts of Ibn Khaldūn's "Autobiography," with a translation into English and a commentary (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952) and "Ibn Khaldūn's "*Autobiography* in the Light of External Arabic Sources" *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome: Instituto per l'Oriente 1956), 1, 287-308. See also M. G. de Slane, "Autobiographie d' Ibn Khaldoun, *Journal Asiatique* 4th ser., 3 (1844), 5-60, 187-210, 291-308 and 325-53.

[43] Young, "Medieval Arabic Autobiography," 183.

[44] See Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 23-30 & 194-98.

tremes were represented by pious, self-effacing Muslims on the one hand and aggressive warrior aristocrats on the other.

As is true of Near Eastern monotheists generally, devout Muslims, whether laymen or members of the *ʿulamā*, the clerical class of theologians and religious functionaries, believed in the necessity of humility and the suppression of the human ego in order effectively to worship god. In some instances Muslim autobiographers even express anxiety about the ethics of recording their own lives, self-conscious about an act of "self-aggrandizement."[45] The Quran is the source of many such injunctions, as in verse 17 of Sūrah 3, which praises those who show "patience, firmness and self-control" and who "worship devoutly."[46] Like Christians, Muslims are advised to be humble remembering God "With humility and in reverence without loudness in words."[47] Muslims, like Christians, are also warned against egotistical self-indulgence that might corrupt the individual and destroy his/her spiritual resolve; "Intoxicants and gambling" are classed as "Satan's handiwork."[48] The significance of these and other injunctions is encapsulated in the term for Islamic law, the *sharīʿah*, whose primary sources are the Quran and the *hadīth*, the attested reports of Muhammad's injunctions or behavior. *Sharīʿah* means the straight path, the path of strict personal morality and social restraint. Thus, "Where man succeeds, it is because of patience and constancy of vision, of loyalty to the divinely rational order of the world and of forsaking the chaotic desires of the self."[49]

The belief that one should suppress egotism in order to gain salvation stimulated the development of a distinct poetical genre among sūfīs, Muslims who practiced a devotional or mystical variant of Islam. These poems were known as *zuhdīyāt*, verses of abstinence.[50] Writers of such poems emphasized the worthlessness of the external or material world and the fallacy of ambition. One

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[45] Reynolds, "Arabic Autobiography," 209.

[46] *The Holy Qur'ān* ʿAbdullah Yūsuf ʿAlī translated and ed. (Brentwood, Md.: Amana Corporation, 1989), 130.

[47] Ibid., V. 205, Sūrah 7.

[48] Ibid., V. 90, Sūrah 5.

[49] Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought in the classical period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

[50] J. T. P. De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry* (Richmond, Gt. Britain: Curzon Press, 1997). Chapter II, "Poems of Abstinence."

of the atypical *rubāʿīyāt* or quatrains attributed to the well-known twelfth century Iranian mathematician and poet ʿUmar Khayyām is an example of such verses that urge the necessity of suppressing the self in order to be saved;

The more from *self* I part I have the more
The more I humble *self*, the higher soar.
How strange the more the Wine of Life I sip
The more befuddled yet the sober more.[51]

A similar sentiment is found expressed by a later Iranian poet, Muhammad Shīrīn Maghribī, born about 1350 near Isfahan in central Iran. A sūfī preoccupied with the doctrine of *tauhīd*, or the unity of god, Maghribī emphasized man's insignificance and the pathetic irrelevance of egoistic self-expression.

Thou art a drop; speak not of the depths of Ocean;
Thou art a mote; speak not of the Sun sublime.
Man of To-day, seek not to express the notion
Of all the past and future spans of Time.....
Of 'I' and 'we' so long as naught thou knowest.
Be silent; speak no more of 'I' and 'We';
Breathe not the names of highest or of lowest,
Till God shall teach thee what the names may be....[52]

Finally in a poem which has been titled "Our Existence is an Enigma," the great Iranian lyricist Shams al-Dīn Hāfiz of Shiraz (b. c.1320), describes a visit to one of the taverns so commonly mentioned in Khayyām's verse. Here the poet's flirtation is unsuccessful because of his egotism, and the poem is a metaphor for relationship between the egotistical Muslim and God.

Left to myself, the tavern-wench I spied
And sought to win her love by speaking fair....

[51] Ahmad Saidi, *Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam* (Berkeley, Ca.: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 221. Whether or not Khayyām wrote this poem—or indeed most of the others attributed to him, is a secondary matter here. See Saidi's "Introduction" and A. J. Arberry's critical discussion in A. J. Arberry ed. and trans., *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam* (London: Penguin, 1981), 9-41. Khayyām, of course, is usually associated with quatrains celebrating systematic indulgence rather than disciplined abstinence.

[52] A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature (*London: George Allen and Unwin, repr. 1967), 408-09.

Said she, her arching eyebrows like a bow....
So long as thou in all created things
Seest but thyself the centre and the end.
Go spread thy dainty nets for other wings-
Too high the Anca's nest for thee, my friend.[53]

A specific example of how this attitude might discourage Muslims from writing highly personal autobiographies is found in a much later story related by the British traveler Alexander Burnes, who during his intelligence gathering mission between Kabul and Bukhara in 1832, reported that he had met a "Khwaja," whom he describes as both a "priest and merchant," possibly a sūfī of the Naqshbandī order to which Bābur belonged.[54] He loaned this man a copy of the memoirs of Shāh Shujāʿ, the early nineteenth century ruler of Kabul and was obviously amused by his reaction. Burnes writes:

> The book was written by the King himself; and gives a detail of his life and adventures, in a simple style, free from extracts of the Koran, metaphors and other extravagancies of oriental authors.... The work in fact, was what would be called by us an interesting detail of events. The Khwaju returned it to me a few days after, saying it was a dry production, not enlivened by the fear of God or a remembrance of the Prophet but entirely occupied with matters of a personal nature.[55]

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[53] A. J. Arberry, *Fifty Poems of Hafiz* (London: Curzon Press, repr. 1993), 125. The ʿAnca" [in Persian, ʿ*anqā*] of the last line quoted here is another name for the fabulous bird known more commonly as *sīmurgh*, which also implies here anything scarce or wonderful.

[54] Khwājah was a common title in Bābur's era among Naqshbandī *pīr*s or *shaykhs*, spiritual teachers, from Central Asia. See Stephen F. Dale and Alam Payind, "The Ahrārī Waqf of Kabul in the Year 1546 and the Mughūl Naqshbandiyyah," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.2 (1999), 218-33. In fact, the order was most commonly known as that of the *Khwājahgān*. Jo-Ann Gross provides explicit evidence of Naqshbandī shaykhs' commercial activities in her article, "Naqshbandī Appeals to the Herat Court: A Preliminary Study of Trade and Property Issues," in Devin DeWeese ed., *Studies on Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2001), 113-28.

[55] Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara,* II, 218-19. Just to emphasize that such attitudes were common to religious classes generally and not just to Muslims, Burnes adds that Bishop Heber, who traveled in and wrote extensively and intelligently of early nineteenth century India, "has been blamed by some" for the worldliness of his memoirs. Shāh Shujāʿs writings are available in Muhammad Husain Herati ed., *Waqiat-i Shah Shuja,* Pts. I & II [Pt. III written by Herati]

In this pious man's view, self-referential autobiography itself was a profane act. Such a person would have been far more likely to approve of St. Augustine's *Confessions* than the self-centered, prosaic memoirs of the Muslim ruler of Kabul.

Pious Muslims and members of the ʿ*ulamā* may have condemned egotism, but members of the ruling elite usually admired and encouraged it, although they often experienced a psychological tension between their aristocratic habits and professed religious ideals. Most Turco-Mongol warriors usually reveled in their egotism and trumpeted their triumphs. The social ethos of such men was a regional version of the values of the warrior class of pre-Islamic Arabia, whose popular genre of *fakhr* or boasting often featured descriptions of drunkenness as well as feats of horsemanship and hunting.[56] The specific Central Asian variant of this tradition to which Bābur was heir has been preserved in the oral epics of Central Asia, where the traditional activities of members of the aristocratic warrior class have been preserved in epic poetry. These epics extol the individualistic, heroic and largely amoral values of this class, the polar opposite of the self-effacing, moralizing ʿ*alīm* or truly pious sūfī. There are, for example, the Kirghīz poems featuring the hero Manas that describe a recently Islamized pastoral nomadic community. "Everyone who has any real existence or function in the poems is individualized and mentioned by name...life is sustained chiefly by hunting and plunder ...[and] it is only rarely that social standards or moral judgements are expressed explicitly."[57]

These poems describe a state of social and cultural evolution that in the Central Asian context was closer to Tīmūr's day than

(Kabul: Afghan Historical Society, 1954). It is described by Shah Mahmoud Hanifi in "Inter-Regional Trade and Colonial State Formation in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2001, 22.

[56] Abdulla el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," in A. F. L. Beeston et al. *Arabic literature to the end of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 81-5.

[57] Nora K. Chadwick and Victor Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 90 and 87-8. The extant forms of these poems date to the eighteenth century. See also Karl Reichl, *Turkic Epic Poetry: Traditions, Forms, Poetic Structure* (N.Y. and London: Garland Publishing, 1992).

Bābur's, but the values they extol and the heroes they describe are a recognizable feature of Bābur's society as well. In fact Bābur's marvelously detailed characterizations of the Turks and Mongols who composed his following represent a fifteenth century class picture of egotistical, hard drinking, socially unrestrained Turco-Mongols, almost none of whom would have blushed at full-throated praise or would have been reluctant to laud themselves. Representative of this class was a Turco-Mongol warrior named Nuyan Beg, whom Bābur describes as "a dissolute, wine-loving rogue."[58] Or another such man who joined Bābur's retinue in 1511-12, Hasan ʿAlī Jalayir, had previously been a falconer. Under the pen name Tufaylī he wrote good panegyric poems known as *qasīdah*s, says Bābur, who goes on to characterize him as "a fearless and extravagant person, a keeper of catamites, he constantly played backgammon and threw the dice."[59]

If they were literate and intelligent, well-born and ambitious, such men might occasionally also write their memoirs. It is not surprising that the Islamic autobiographical texts that most closely resemble Bābur's were composed by members of the warrior elite. One example is the *Tibyān* of the eleventh century Berber amīr of Granada, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Buluggīn (b. c.447/1055-6- d. c.1095).[60] Largely a military-political narrative interspersed with observations on statecraft, it was written to salvage the author's reputation and that of his family after his deposition in 1090. The author devotes so much space to reflections on politics and statecraft that the *Tibyān* is in substantial measure an example of "mirrors for princes" literature.

Ibn Buluggīn wrote in the first person and at a relatively advanced age. He begins and concludes the work with pious reflections. Islam is a moral reference point for him and all such authors. However, in the last chapter these reflections are balanced by a series of observations and aphorisms in which he unmistakably shows himself to be a member of the self-indulgent ruling elite

[58] BN-M, f. 171b.

[59] BN-M, fs. 174b-175a.

[60] Amin T. Tibi ed. and trans., *The Tibyān* (Leiden: Brill, 1986). The author's frank rationale for writing is given on p. 190 of this edition. See also Reynolds, "Essentializing the Self: Private Life and Personality in the Memoirs of Ibn Buluggīn," in Reynolds ed. *Interpreting the Self*, 74-9.

whose values set him apart from self-abnegating sūfīs. Thus he writes:

> It is said that sexual intercourse is one of the best remedies for melancholy because of the momentary pleasure it affords. So also is a session at the bath for it fills one with pleasure. A person who seeks delight throughout his life should enjoy himself whenever he can find an easy way of satisfying his desires. He who snatches his moment of pleasure is a winner, but he who delays it is a loser. For a man is the child of the here and now.[61]

In this final chapter Ibn Buluggīn also mentions his poetry, which he says he dabbled in "as kings are wont to do in their pastimes," although he quotes none in his narrative.[62] He also includes an erudite discussion of the pleasures and dangers of wine. At the immediate end of the work Ibn Buluggīn defends his court life, saying among other things that there was nothing wrong taking boys as "boon companions" for "is not kingship or wealth intended for enjoyment and adornment?"[63] Overall the last chapter is one of the most psychologically interesting documents in medieval Islamic literature in its accidental revelations of powerfully recalled emotions.

A second, but intellectually and socially less interesting autobiographical memoir, is that of the late twelfth-century Arab noble, Abū'l Muzaffar Usāmah ibn Murshid ibn Munqidh (b. 488/1095 - d. 584/1188). Usāmah, as he is generally known, was the son and nephew of the "kings" of Shayzar, a castle-town on the Orontes river in northern Syria, although he spent much of his mature life in exile in Egypt and Damascus. Another uncle served in the Fatimid Egyptian court, and Usāmah's son became a boon companion of Salāh al-Dīn, who appointed his eighty year-old father to be governor of Beirut, just before it was taken by the Crusaders. Usāmah ibn Munqidh's autobiography, the *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* (*The Book of Learning by Examples*), is intended, as its title indicates, to be a kind of "mirror for princes" text, although it is largely given over to accounts of "intermittent war and incessant hunting."[64] As the

[61] Tibi ed. and trans., *The Tibyān*, 186.
[62] Ibid., 174.
[63] Ibid., 192.
[64] Young, "Medieval Arabic Autobiography," 186.

author describes his own warrior life before being weakened by old age:

> My whole ambition was to engage in combat with my rivals,
> Whom I always took for prey. They therefore were in constant
> Trembling on account of me. More terrible in warfare than
> Nighttime, more impetuous in assault than a torrent,
> And more adventurous on the battlefield than destiny![65]

The work is far simpler in style and content than Ibn Buluggīn's—it is after all the anecdotal dictation of a ninety year old man. However, the author exhibits a similar unapologetic egotism and uses a simple, idiosyncratic style to render the Crusades believably as a bewildering series of vicious petty skirmishes, marked by occasional Muslim-Christian friendship and interspersed with the periodic prolonged seige. Like Ibn Buluggīn, Usāmah was a literate member of a warrior aristocracy who had studied grammar, calligraphy, poetry and the Quran and composed acclaimed collections of verse, but like the Berber he does not dwell on his literary and artistic interests in the text itself. Nor does Usāmah ibn Munqidh exhibit any of Bābur's taste for careful organization, quantification and precise detail. Perhaps because he dictated these reminiscences in extreme old age "Logic and scientific classification of data were no idols to him...."[66] Nor do Ibn Buluggīn or Usāmah ibn Munqidh include the piquant observations about a vast spectrum of human and natural phenomena that enrich and enliven Bābur's autobiography.

The Vaqāʾiʿ as Autobiography

In terms of the social class of its author Bābur's *Vaqāʾiʿ* represents a similar kind of text to those of Usāmah ibn Munqidh and Ibn Buluggīn, but one considerably more ambitious, artistically more compelling and composed on a vastly greater scale. Bābur, that is, wrote as a member of the Turco-Mongol warrior aristocracy of Mawarannahr. He was a far more cultured man than the pre-

[65] Philip K. Hitti translated, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades, Memoirs of Usāmah Ibn Munqidh* (New York., N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2000), 191.
[66] Ibid., 15.

Islamic Arab poets or Manas of the Kirgīz epic poems, but not necessarily more so than the well-educated Usāmah ibn Munqidh or Ibn Buluggīn. As a descendant of Tīmūr and Chingīz Khan, he belonged to essentially the same social class, one whose raison d'etre was war and conquest and whose representatives usually saw warfare and hunting as variants of the same aggressive activity. He expresses his own sense that these were the norms of his class on many occasions, as when he implicitly criticizes one of his Tīmūrid cousins for lacking *mulkgīrliq* or "kingdom-seizing" ambitions.[67] Bābur was of course a Muslim, but one whose compatriots were professional warriors, unapologetic individualists and usually self-indulgent pleasure seekers, more often than not amusing themselves in their leisure with chess, sustained drinking bouts and/or the consumption of the intoxicating confection *maʿjūn*, and the unrestrained pursuit of sexual pleasure. No one who reads the *Vaqāʾiʿ*—or the works of Ibn Buluggīn or Usāmah—could possibly imagine that the sense of self was less highly developed among people in the Islamic world than in the populations of medieval Europe or Renaissance Italy.

Bābur's work is not a modern autobiography in which the author attempts to trace, explain or justify his personality.[68] His work is closer in spirit and in fact almost identical in character to the *Vita* of Benvenuto Cellini. He is someone who gives us "the complex reality of the man without any analysis."[69] Like Cellini he does not discuss his childhood as a distinct and psychologically formative stage of life.[70] Like Cellini, Bābur devotes little space to recounting

[67] BN-M, f. 38a.

[68] This definition has been the norm since Rousseau's *Confessions* were published in the late eighteenth century. The French critic Philippe Lejeune, for example, defines autobiography as a "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality." Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* Katherine Leary translated and Paul John Eakin edited (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 4. Most modern scholars of the genre like Karl Joachim Weintraub, consider the difference between autobiography and memoir to be that of introspection, which they believe to be characteristic of autobiography. See his article "Autobiography and Historical Consciousness," *Critical Enquiry* 1, 4 (June, 1975), 821-48. In fact these terms are not used by scholars in a rigorously exclusive way.

[69] The opinion of Roy Pascal, an author of one of the seminal modern studies of the autobiographical genre and one of the few western scholars to acknowledge the existence of Bābur's work. *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, 31.

[70] As Philippe Ariès has shown the idea of childhood as a distinct phase of life

his family relations, although he exhibits far more emotion on this subject than does the Italian. Like Cellini the artist, Bābur the presumptive monarch is preoccupied with recounting his career. Indeed, the two authors are so fundamentally similar in outlook as to suggest that there was a cross-cultural autobiographical type before Rousseau revolutionized the genre by making his own personality the subject of his *Confessions*. That type might be identified as the "professional" autobiography, reflections in which people wrote of themselves primarily as representatives of a vocation: kings or bureaucrats, churchmen or philosophers, artists or poets. This comparison might be expanded to include China, since the period between 1565 and 1680 has been termed "the golden age of Chinese autobiography."[71]

To understand the nature of Bābur's *Vaqā'i'* and the characteristics that distinguish it from the works of Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah it is useful to artificially separate and analyze its political and personal strands and as well as to discuss the stylistic characteristics that give the work its considerable literary power. It makes sense to begin with the intertwined political, administrative and didactic goals that pervade the work. Nowhere in his extant text, in his poetry or any of his other writings does Bābur explain why he wrote or whether any particular work inspired him to do so; if he ever wrote an introduction to the *Vaqā'i'*, it is now lost.[72] Still, he leaves no doubt that like Usāmah and Ibn Buluggīn he is writing first and foremost to chronicle his political and military career. From the opening sentence to the last fragmentary phrase he is preoccupied with narrating his accomplishments as a Tīmūrid. The entire *Vaqā'i'* is a testimonial to his political purpose, and it is suffused with a profound and utterly self-assured sense of political legitimacy derived from his Tīmūrid descent, the source of his self-described imperial ambitions or, as he baldly expresses it, his "ambition for rule and desire for conquest."[73] Bābur's Tīmūrid identity was the driving force of his personality and his narration of the

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was a recent development in Europe as it was certainly also in Asia. *Centuries of Childhood* translated by Roger Baldick (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1952).

[71] Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress, Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), xii.

[72] Neither does Ibn Buluggīn. In Usāmah's case the first folios of the work are missing.

[73] BN-M, f. 55b.

struggle to establish a viable Tīmūrid state is the dramatic story line that gives coherence to this text.[74]

Shortly after the opening of the book he reminds his readers of his matchless lineage, a characteristic steppe means to establish social bona fides, typically done when two strangers would meet and identify themselves with lineages stretching back several generations. Characteristically he first carefully demonstrates that his father and uncles were Mīrānshāhī Tīmūrids, descendants of Mīrānshāh Mīrzā, Tīmūr's third son. Speaking first of his father ʿUmar Shaykh, Bābur writes:

> He was born in Samarqand in 860 (1465). He was Sultān Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā's fourth son, younger than [Bābur's uncles] Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā, Sultān Muhammad Mīrzā and Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā. Sultān Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā was Sultān Muhammad Mīrzā's son. Sultān Muhammad Mīrzā was the son of Mīrānshāh Mīrzā, Tīmūr Beg's third son.[75]

Bābur then identifies his father's wives, the most important of whom for him was his mother, Qutlugh Nigār Khanïm, the second daughter of the Mongol Yūnas Khan. Bābur also supplies a genealogy for his maternal grandfather, Yūnas Khan, as he was a de-

[74] A point made by Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, 19. He writes: "The quality of an autobiography depends ultimately on the quality of the spirit of the writer.... I mean a capacity which differs according to the nature of the personality and life, and which succeeds in creating in us the consciousness of the driving force of this life, what Montaigne calls a man's "master form." John Paul Eakin makes a similar point in his superbly written study of western autobiography, *Fictions in Autobiography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). He quotes Erik Erikson's discussion of identity formation in his psychoanalytic biography, *Young Man Luther*. Erikson wrote: "By accepting some definition as to who he is, usually on the basis of a function in an economy, a place in the sequence of generations, and a status in the structure of society, the adult is able to selectively reconstruct his past in such a way that, step for step, it seems to have planned him or, better, he seems to have planned it." *Fictions in Autobiography*, 109, n. 32.

[75] BN-M, f. 6b. Patrilineal descent was the norm in Bābur's day, whether it was or not in earlier Turkic societies. While steppe societies may have been more egalitarian than the great urban civilizations of China, Iran and India individuals with aristocratic lineages were always careful to establish their social precedence. The nineteenth century Hungarian scholar Arminius Vambery remarked on this social/political awareness and observed that when two Kirgiz tribesmen meet the first question asked is: 'Who are they seven fathers—ancestors?' The person addressed, even if a child in his seventh year, always has his answer ready, for otherwise he would be considered very ill-bred." Quoted in Chadwick and Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia,* 12.

scendant of Chingīz Khan's second son, Chaghatay Khan,

Both Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah are also careful of course to proclaim the lineages that defined their identity and careers. Bābur's account is partly distinguished from their narratives by his wealth of detail about his parentage and social relations, which is symptomatic of his penchant for detailed, precise description that distinguishes the entire work. However, his writing is also distinguished by two other traits. First, he does not rely solely on his lineage or political status to assert legitimacy, but implicitly demonstrates that he possessed civilizing cultural attributes that were respected traits of a late fifteenth-century Tīmūrid ruler. The two most important of these attributes are Bābur's knowledge of and active participation in high literary culture and his religious orientation and learning.

Like Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah ibn Munqidh Bābur wrote poetry, but unlike his predecessors he integrated much of his verse into the text. He did so partly as a stylistic device but partly also to demonstrate his intention to master the poetic art that was the most accessible and public form of high culture in this as in other premodern societies. Indeed, in narrating his attempt to master the poetic art Bābur offers his readers one of the most complete accounts of the evolution of a writer available for this period. Apart from demonstrating his literary knowledge, Bābur is also careful to inform readers of his commitment to the dominant Sunni Muslim faith of his Ferghanah homeland. He does so in a variety of ways: by describing his attachment to his religious tutor, a man with a prestigious scholarly lineage, and by mentioning his formal study of Islamic law during the Kabul period. On many other occasions Bābur proclaims his religious commitment in far more subtle ways that his audience would immediately understand, but which are not always obvious to the modern reader. One example of these implicit proclamations is his discussion of how, sometime after he took Kabul in 1504, he paid landowners north of the city for some garden property that his Tīmūrid uncle, Ulugh Beg Kābulī, had forcefully appropriated for his use years earlier. By mentioning the compensation he paid for this land Bābur is telling his readers that he was a "just sultan," that is a ruler who adhered to Muslim administrative and legal norms.[76]

[76] See below Chapter 6.

The entire *Vaqā'i'* can, therefore, be read as a carefully conceived, legitimizing self-presentation of a Turco-Mongol aristocrat who is a knowledgeable, accomplished writer and a committed Sunni Muslim who rules according to accepted Islamic administrative norms. As its tone and content implicitly demonstrate, the legitimizing audience for the text was comprised, most importantly, of the Islamized, literate, Turkī-speaking Tīmūrid and Chaghatay Mongol elite, and beyond them, the broader society of Turco-Mongol military aristocrats. In geographic terms he was speaking especially to the Turco-Mongol populations of his Central Asian homeland, despite the fact that when he wrote the *Vaqā'i'*, Afghanistan and India had become the refuge for so many of his own Tīmūrid and Chingīzid relations. His religious writings were also directed partly at a Central Asian constituency, but to religious scholars in Samarqand and Bukhara. However, the *Vaqā'i'* also served an important administrative function that is readily apparent in the carefully conceived tripartite structure of the text.

Bābur has organized the *Vaqā'i'* around the three principal phases of his political career, creating a structurally symmetrical work that is one of many internal indications of his systemizing intelligence. In the first section he narrates his life from the time he inherited his father's appanage in the Ferghanah valley east of Samarqand until he fled from the Uzbeks to Kabul in 1504. In the second he describes his life from the moment he entered Kabul in 1504 down to 1526, although fifteen years of narrative for this period are missing. In the last third of the text he recounts his victories in north India and subsequent attempt to pacify the region, although this section too is incomplete, breaking off a year and a half before his death in December 1530. Bābur begins each of these sections with a statement defining his political situation, appropriately opening the Ferghanah section—which in the extant text is also the opening of the *Vaqā'i'*—by writing in the first person: "In the month of Ramazān of the year 899 (1494) during my twelfth year I became *pādshāh* (ruler, monarch, emperor) in the province of Ferghanah."[77] After describing his flight from Fergha-

[77] BN-M, f. 1a. *Pādshāh* or *bādshāh* in its Indian variant, is an Iranian, Persian-language title that literally means "protecting" [pād] "lord" [shāh]. It signifies a monarch, ruler or king, while the related title, *shāhanshāh* or "king of kings" used by pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sasanian rulers of Iran, connotes an emperor.

nah and occupation of Kabul in 1504, he prefaces the rest of the Kabul narrative with a similar statement. "At the end of Rabīʿ al-awwal with Almighty God's grace and mercy Kabul and Ghazni and its districts were taken and occupied without a struggle."[78] Then near the beginning of the final or Indian section, after describing the victory that gave him Delhi and Agra in April 1526, he writes: "On Thursday the 28th of Rajab (May 10th) at the time of the afternoon prayer Agra was entered and [we] dismounted at the house of [the defeated] Sultān Ibrahīm Lūdī."[79]

After introducing each of these sections Bābur supplies a gazetteer for each region that came under his control. In the text immediately after each of the three political statements defining his rule—in Ferghanah, Kabul and India—Bābur surveys the geography, ethnography, resources and flora and fauna of each of these regions. In addition to these three main divisions he also includes a separate survey of Samarqand, similarly placed in the text following his first occupation of Tīmūr's capital in October/November 1497.[80] In the case of Samarqand he includes a critique of the principal buildings and suburban districts of the capital. Bābur may have been inspired to write these gazetteers by a familiarity with such well-known Persian-language geographical works as the anonymous tenth century survey of the known world, the *Hudūd al-ʿālam*.[81] He is even more likely to have known one of the two fifteenth century Tīmūrid-era works: the *Jughrāfiyā-yi Hāfiz-i Abrū*, the economic geography of the Harat region completed in the first half of the century, and the more comprehensive survey of the geography, personalities, monuments of Khurasan written just as the end of the century, the *Rauzāt al-jannāt fī ausāf madīnat Harat*.[82]

[78] BN-M, f. 128a.

[79] BN-M, f. 268b.

[80] James L. Westcoat, Jr. is one of the few scholars to recognize this characteristic of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. See his article "Mughal Gardens and Geographic Sciences, Then and Now," in Attilio Petruccioli ed., *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 190.

[81] See C. E. Bosworth ed., *Hudūd al-ʿĀlam, 'The Regions of the World*," A Persian Geography 372 a.h.-982 a. d. Translated and Explained by V. Minorsky with the Preface by V. V. Barthold (London: Luzac, repr. 1970).

[82] Māyil Harāvī ed., *Jughrāfiyā-yi Hāfiz-i Abrū: qismat-i rubʿ-i Khurāsān* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1349/1970), and Muʿīn al-Dīn Muhammad Zamchī Isfizārī, *Rauzāt al-jannāt fī ausāf madīnat Harat* 897-899 a. h. [1491-1493] Sayyid Muhammad Kāzim Imām ed. (Tehran: Tehran University, 1338-39/ 1959-60), 2 v. When describing the Kabul region Bābur use the Turkic term *buluk* several

He does not mention either work, and his surveys are partially distinguished by unusually detailed information on flora and fauna. Yet, whatever the inspiration, his gazetteers are the first known comprehensive surveys of this kind in South Asia. It is possible that his example provided part of the model for the great historical and administrative treatise of Abū'l Fazl ʿAllāmī, the courtier and historian of Bābur's grandson, Akbar.[83]

Two of Bābur's gazetteers are relatively brief. This is true of his surveys of Ferghanah and Hindustan. His account of Kabul and its neighboring districts is, though, both detailed and comprehensive. He knew eastern Afghanistan far better than either Ferghanah or India; it was smaller and he spent most of his adult life in the region. His account is the first extensive survey of this area, and it was known to and used by his successors. It is, in fact, a strategic survey that provided crucial information for governing Kabul, in Bābur's Indian perspective the second city of a state he saw as an Indo-Afghān empire.[84]

Bābur probably intended these gazetteers to be used in this way by his sons and their officials, and he also seems to have thought of the entire *Vaqā'iʿ* as having another and didactic purpose, to be a kind of mirror for Tīmūrid princes. Passages in the *Akbar nāmah*, the history of the reign of his grandson, suggest that his successors viewed his memoirs at least partly as *nasīhat nāmah*, an advice treatise, although probably in a more reverential and less practical way than Babur intended. In the words of the *Akbar nāmah*'s author, Abū'l Fazl, Bābur's book was an "*Institute* for all earthly sovereigns and a manual for teaching right thoughts and proper ideas."[85] Even

times to refer to subdivisions of *tuman*s. He uses it only one other time, at the beginning of the Ferghanah section. This is the term Hāfiz-i Abrū uses for subdivisions of districts around Harat.

[83] It is not accurate to say, therefore, that Abu'l Fazl's administrative and historical treatise, the *Āʾīn-i Akbarī* had no precedent. See Shireen Moosvi, "Making and Recording History—Akbar and the *Akbar-nāma*," in Iqtidar Alam Khan ed., *Akbar and His Age* (Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1999), 181-87. It is in China that gazetteers of various kinds became a well established genre. For an introduction see Timothy Brook, *Geographical Sources of Ming-Qing History* (Ann Arbor, Mi.: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988).

[84] It was as important for rulers of Bābur's day to have accurate intelligence as for later British officials whose interests are discussed by Christopher A. Bayly, *Empire and Information, Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India*, 1780-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[85] AN,I, 278. Bābur's memoirs were translated into Persian by November,

so the *Vaqā'i'* was not a generic piece of advice literature such as the well-known eleventh century "mirror for princes" text, the *Qābūs-nāmah*,[86] which is presented as a series of explicit lessons on various topics ranging from relations with one's mother and father to drinking customs, the purchase of horses, friendship and the conduct of government. Unlike these instructions that are abstracted from a particular context and then generalized, most of Bābur's lessons are an implicit part of his particular narrative, and perhaps more effective for that reason. An example is when he carefully describes his early military defeats in Ferghanah, a remarkable discussion for a royal author at this or any period and one presumably meant to instruct his sons. Twice he describes cases where he or his men were surprised and defeated because he or they forgot to post sentries, and Bābur attributes these defeats to lack of experience.[87] On some occasions he does stop to offer an explicit moral, as when he observes that his cousin who refused to join the anti-Uzbek coalition in 1506 should have had the intelligence to remember that a man's reputation outlives him.[88] It is easy to see how this observation could be expanded to become a thematic chapter in a typical "mirror for princes" work.

The closest Bābur ever comes to an actual "mirror for princes" series of observations occurs near the end of the *Vaqā'i'* where Bābur has copied into the text what might be called a personal *nasīhat nāmah*, or "letter of advice" to his son Humāyūn. Written to Humāyūn in Afghanistan on November 27,1528, just two years before Bābur's death, the letter includes advice on almost every conceivable subject, including Humāyūn's spelling error in using the wrong "t" in the word *iltifāt*, "regard" or "favor." Among other

1589. AN,III, 862. "On this day [24 November 1589] the Khān-Khānān (Bairām's son 'Abdu-r-Rahīm) produced before the August Presence [Akbar] the Memoirs of Firdūs Makānī (Bābur) which he had rendered into Persian out of Turkī...."

[86] Reuben Levy ed., *The Nasīhat-Nāma known as Qābūs Nāma of Kai Kā'ūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs Washmgīr* (London: Luzac, 1951). See also the example of the oldest Turkic example of the "mirror for princes" genre, the late eleventh century work *Kutadgu Bilig*, which is similarly organized into thematic chapters. See Robert Dankoff ed. and trans., *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig) A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes* by Yūsuf Khāss Hājib (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[87] See BN-M, f. 111a for one example, discussed below chapter 2.

[88] BN-M, f. 185b. A point he makes again a few pages later about his despised enemy Shībānī Khan. BN-M, f. 206a.

things it is a reminder of how difficult it must have been to have been the son of a successful and hectoring, perfectionist father. Bābur's more conventional kingly advice included his reaction to Humāyūn's apparent desire to be alone. "Solitude," he writes, "is a vice in kingship." To drive home this point he quotes a line from the thirteenth century Iranian poet Saʿdī, whose two works, the *Gulistān* and *Bustān*, were for Bābur as they are today for Persian speakers, an inexhaustible source of aphorisms. In this case:

اگر پای بندی رضا پیش گیر   و کر یکسواری سر خوش گیر

If your feet are fettered, learn to be content.
But if you are a lone horseman, follow your own way.

Bābur then concludes with yet another hoary observation, "Solitude is not consistent with kingship."[89]

Kingship was obviously Bābur's first, last and perennial concern, but it is his ability to give an affecting human portrait of the man who would be and finally was king, that has endeared him to generations of readers. Both Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah are able to convey some aspects of their emotional lives, but they still remain largely one-dimensional figures who are describing their careers at maturity, although each gives some impression of the psychological effects of old age. Bābur's remarkable achievement is his ability to draw readers into his life almost as if he were the affecting character of a compelling novel. Writing in the first person explains only a little about Bābur's ability to engage even the novelist E. M. Forster, and this usage does not distinguish him from his predecessors. Indeed, he may use the first person, singular and plural, less often than Ibn Buluggīn or Usāmah. Often he chooses to use the third person passive voice, although sometimes he seems to do so as a way of avoiding responsibility or distancing himself from some action. The fundamental reason why Bābur is so much more dramatically effective than any previous Muslim autobiographer is that he is also able to give a convincing portrait of himself as an individual who changes as he matures—from an insecure young man through maturity and then to reflective and melancholy old age. His account is especially sympathetic because of the individualized way he has of describing recognizable human emotions as he recounts the crises and triumphs of his tumultuous life.

[89] BN-M, f. 349a.

These changes seem to parallel the three major phases of Bābur's political career in Mawarannahr, Kabul and India, an impression that reinforces the dramatic impact of his *Vaqā'i'*. It is not that Bābur himself explicitly discusses his life in this way; once again it is his narrative that implicitly creates this impression. Just his description of military defeats caused by inexperience contributes to this feeling. More compelling than these incidents, though, are the times when he interrupts his bewilderingly detailed descriptions of military campaigns to recall emotional upheavals triggered by political or psychological crises. He records the first such instance when describing his feelings in March 1498, after learning that his enemies had just occupied his home fortress of Andijan and executed his childhood religious tutor, Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī. Writing of himself as a young man of sixteen he says of his reaction: "Since I had known myself, I never knew such pain and grief," and concludes, "It was very hard on me, I wept uncontrollably."[90]

Shortly after recounting this wrenching event Bābur reinforces the impression he has created of a struggling, emotionally uncertain young man when he describes another emotional upheaval that happened just slightly over a year later. In the course of recounting the confusing events that allowed him to retake Andijān in June/July 1499 and to enjoy a moment's respite from campaigning, he recalls developing what he calls a "strange" or "extraordinary" affection for a boy in the *ordu bāzārï*, the "camp bazar." Despite the fact that just a short time earlier he had consummated an arranged marriage with one of his Tīmūrid cousins, Bābur says that before seeing this boy, whose name, he reports, fortuitously happened to be Bāburi, "I had not felt affection for anyone. Indeed, I knew nothing of affection or love even from report."[91] What follows is an lengthy, vivid recollection in which Bābur dwells on his debilitating infatuation for this boy in highly emotive language. Even though Bābur's particular language may have been at least partly derived from Arabo-Persian literary models, his depiction of his anti-social self-absorption rings true even after five centuries. Due to my "overwhelming passion," Bābur writes, "I wandered shoeless and bareheaded through street and lane...neither respecting friends or strangers nor caring for myself or others."[92]

[90] BN-M, fs. 54a-b.
[91] BN-M, f. 75b.
[92] BN-M, f. 76a. See below chapter II for an account of this incident.

Bābur's portrayal of his adolescent emotional turmoil powerfully communicates a sense of self, an individuality, that is rarely encountered in pre-colonial Islamic literature or indeed in most oral or literary traditions prior to the eighteenth century. By powerfully depicting his emotions, which in Islamic sources are usually described generically or, more usually, are filtered through the socially respectable medium of poetry, Bābur imbues his text with a seemingly modern presence that Forster, Roux and others have been quick to detect.[93] In these passages he resembles some of the autobiographers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who participated in the broader literary movement of European Romanticism and vigorously asserted the "claims of the subjective self."[94] One of the reasons why Bābur seems so spiritually close to European autobiographers of this era is his unashamed revelation of his own feelings, as when he describes his reaction to the accidental death of a close Mongol friend in 1502. His death "made a strong impression on me," Bābur writes, "Rarely have I been so affected by a person's death. I wept continuously for a week or ten days."[95]

Bābur so persuasively conveys a sense of his humanity because he shows himself to be reacting with universally recognizable emotions to the particular crises of his youth—his depression after early military disasters, the confused, turbulent feelings of adolescent love, and the profound sense of loss that follows the death of a close friend. On several other occasions Bābur draws readers into his emotional life, reinforcing the "autobiographical pact" he has so effectively concluded with them—ensuring their loyalty by playing on their sympathy.[96] One of the most poignant of all these passages is the one near the beginning of the Kabul section where he

[93] As Dwight Reynolds writes about the use of poetry to express emotion in Arabic autobiographies, "Poetry communicated ideas in a 'marked' discourse separate from prose. ....it could also be used...to express deeply felt emotions: love, grief, loneliness, anger, yearning. All these were themes more often expressed in poetry than in prose." Dwight Reynolds ed., *Interpreting the Self, Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 94.

[94] Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, 51.

[95] BN-M, f. 98b.

[96] The term is borrowed from Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, although it is used in a somewhat different sense here. See especially Chapter I: "The Autobiographical Pact."

describes his mother's death and perhaps because of the nature of the event, it seems to mark a transition in his emotional life. At least it marks a transition in the text, for Bābur never again describes his emotions so openly in the *Vaqā'i'*, although later he frequently uses verse for this purpose.

Writing about events in June 1505, less than a year after he had fled from Ferghanah and occupied Kabul, Bābur describes how his mother, Qutlugh Nigār Khanïm, fell ill with fever. While he doesn't often allude to his emotional ties with his family in the *Vaqā'i'*, this passage gives some idea of the personal affection that transcended the self-interested considerations of dynastic legitimacy and political alliances, usually the only aspect of kinship relations alluded to in traditional historical sources. After his mother was bled to no effect an Iranian *tabīb* or physician, appropriately named Sayyid Tabīb, prescribed a traditional Khurasanī cure, watermelon. This too failed and Bābur's mother died six days later.[97] During the forty-day period of mourning that followed Bābur learned that his grandmother and trusted counselor, Isen Devlat Begim, and a Mongol uncle had also died a short time before. Then just as the mourning period neared an end it was resumed when Shāh Begim, a wife of his maternal grandfather, Yūnas Khan, and one of Yūnas Khan's daughters, Mihrnigār Khanïm, arrived from Khurasan. "Lamentations began anew," writes Bābur, "The grief [caused by] these losses was immeasurable."[98]

Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of the Kabul section leaves readers uncertain if Bābur's psychological response to political and personal crises of this period differed significantly from that of his youthful Ferghanah years. More than two-thirds of the text that

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[97] However touchingly archaic the use of melons may appear from the twentieth century perspective, this treatment does reflect the prestige of melons from Khurasan, the region now included in northeastern Iran and western Afghanistan. Once in the later history of relations between the Tīmūrid-Mughuls and the Safavids, a Safavid export ban on these melons became a casus belli between the two empires. Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22 and n. 32. Melons, of course, provided water and sugar, so they may actually have done patients some limited good.

[98] BN-M, fs. 156b-157a. Many of Bābur's female relatives have names ending in what might be called affectionate titles and grammatically are Turkī possessives. Thus, *begim* is "my beg," and *khanïm* "my khan." The latter is the origin of the Iranian *khānum* or "lady," which, as in the Turcol-Mongol usage, comes after the name. See BN-A, "Begim," pp. 587-89.

covers the years between 1504 and 1526 is missing, most pages probably lost when Bābur's son Humāyūn was driven from India by resurgent Afghān forces in 1540. These lost sections would have included his account of the last great political debacle of his life, his brief reconquest of Samarqand in 1511 with help from Safavid Iran, followed by his expulsion from the city once again by Uzbek forces less than a year later. Some of the extant text appears to be in unrevised diary form, meaning that Bābur probably wrote these pages in Kabul and didn't have time to transform it into the more polished narrative that characterizes the Ferghanah section. His entries for 1519, for example, often appear as a series of staccato-like notations and might have included later reflections if he had lived to make them.

Yet even given the incomplete state of the Kabul section readers are still left with the impression of man who has matured in both personal and political ways. Bābur partly suggests this just by the events he chooses to discuss for the years 1505 and 1506. Within a year of his mother's and grandmother's death Bābur writes that he assumed the title of *pādshāh*, the Iranian imperial title that in his memoirs he anachronistically assigns himself when he describes his inheritance of his father's kingdom in 1494. Then immediately following this passage he mentions that his first son, Humāyūn, was born on 6 March 1506.[99] Whether or not Bābur assumed the title before his son was born is not clear, but just his narration of these important events show this to have been a transitional year in his young life, following almost immediately upon his acquisition of Kabul and the death of his mother and grandmother. In his surviving narrative of the Kabul years the adolescent emotional traumas in Ferghanah now also give way to allusions to a series of marriages and births of children. He is married a second time in 1507, and a second son is born to him in 1519. In narrating these family events Babur seems to mark his transition to adulthood. He also remembers he had matured as a military strategist during these years, for when he describes the victorious conclusion of his attack on Qandahār in 1507 he writes in a self-congratulatory passage, which is also a model of the autobiographer's egotistical art, "I prepared an excellent battle order. Never before had I arranged things so well."[100] Whether or not he ever tried to reconcile this

[99] Both events are described in fs. 215a-b.
[100] BN-M, f. 209a.

statement with an explanation for his last defeat by Uzbeks five years later in 1512 will never be known.

The reader's sense that during his Kabul years Bābur had both matured and relaxed stems partly from his willingness to drink wine and the uninhibited delight he expresses when describing the camaraderie of extended drinking bouts with his companions. Such scenes are nowhere present in his narrative of the Ferghanah decade from 1494 to 1504. Probably this is due to the fact that during his early life in Ferghanah he had steadfastly observed the Quranic injunctions against alcohol taught him by his childhood religious tutor and political advisor, Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī, the man whose murder caused him such grief in 1498. While on a visit to Harat from Kabul in December 1506, he was tempted to drink wine by his urbane cousins, who still held sway in this, the sophisticated cultural capital of the late Tīmūrid world. Complex questions of etiquette and social precedence inhibited Bābur from drinking wine at this time, but sometime after this visit he started to take wine as well as the drugged confection, *maʿjūn*. In another part of the text he explicitly mentions drinking Bukhara wines during his last, brief occupation of Samarqand in 1511-12. In any case, when his narrative resumes in 1519 after a ten-year gap he seems like a man transformed, enjoying life as a Tīmūrid primus inter pares among longtime Turco-Mongol aristocratic companions in a seemingly never ending series of drinking parties. It is evident from his later narrative in the Indian section that Bābur looked back to this period as his personal golden age, bracketed by the emotional and political instability of his youth and the bittersweet triumphs of his Indian years.

Bābur's account of the moveable feasts that dominate his narrative for 1519 and 1520, when the narrative again breaks off for five years, also serves him as a second act for what becomes in the third section of the *Vaqāʾiʿ* and in his poetry, a dramatic account of military triumph that is eventually trumped by illness, nostalgia and a concern for spiritual redemption. Whatever uncertainties linger about his personal development during the poorly documented Kabul years they now give way to the compelling immediacy of the Indian section of the text that Bābur wrote between 1526 and 1529. This is supplemented by a *dīwān* or collection of poems Bābur wrote between 1526 and 1528 that collectively represents some of

the most openly autobiographical verse that is found in the Turkī or Persian poetry of the period. Indeed, Bābur's feelings are more obviously on display in the verse he wrote in India than in the prose text. However, in both prose and poetry Bābur communicates a convincing self-portrait of an aging monarch whose emotional life differed markedly from his days in Ferghanah or Kabul. His account of this period is also supplemented by the autobiographical memoir of his daughter, Gulbadan Begim, whose account of Bābur's last months add a touching denouement to Bābur's own writings.[101]

It is precisely in Bābur's description of his illness and nostalgia for the good old days in Kabul, contrasted by accounts of his remorse for religious transgressions of that earlier life, that he powerfully paints a self-portrait of a man entering the last stage of his life. As in earlier sections Bābur spends most of his narrative energy in the Indian section describing the political situation and the seemingly never-ending military campaigns that were necessary to consolidate his hold over north India and the Gangetic valley. Fairly early in the last pages he scatters hints of his mortality, something he must have felt acutely as he wrote in India where he so often fell seriously ill. Illnesses that earlier in the narrative lasted for a few days now sometimes stretch on for weeks, undefined stomach ailments of the kind that make any longtime resident of India cringe in sympathy and possible recognition. In the *Vaqāʾiʿ* he briefly describes his symptoms, reserving poetry for emotive renditions of his fever and sleepless nights. It is poetry too that he turns to when he tries to describe his sense of loss and loneliness at a time when his sons and many of his closest companions were in Afghanistan, where they had fled after Bābur's initial victories because they could not adjust to India's climate. It is most of all in poetry that Bābur expresses his sense of regret for his religious failings, where in the autobiographical mold of St. Augustine and other authors of spiritual quests, he constructs a dramatic contrast between his self-indulgent former self and a regretful, more pious maturity.

[101] Gulbadan Begim, *The History of Humāyūn (Humāyūn-Nāma)*.

The Power of Language and the Truth of Detail

The inherent drama and carefully structured presentation of his political and personal life give Bābur's writings much of the dramatic literary structure that distinguishes his autobiographical presentation from earlier Islamic autobiographies. Nevertheless, his ability to make his account so compelling is also due to the relative simplicity and specificity of his writing. It is important, of course, that like Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah Bābur wrote in the first person, as he does when he opens the Ferghanah section, although he doesn't maintain that voice throughout the text.[102] Yet whatever voice he uses he never abdicates the narrative center stage, and speaks of himself in the first person just as often at the end of the work as at the beginning. Writing about events of June 1529, about a year and a half before he died, he remarks in the first person in one of his characteristically engaging asides, about his love for the wonderful fruit he recalled from his days in Mawarannahr and Afghanistan. He reports that he had been able to grow quite decent grapes in his newly constructed *Hasht Bihisht* or "Eight Paradises" garden in Agra, which along with newly cultivated Afghān melons had given him great pleasure.[103]

Bābur's voice can be heard so clearly in the *Vaqā'i'* because he writes in a relatively simple style. His style is simple, that is, when compared to the complex prose favored by most Perso-Islamic court historians, a kind of writing that often obliterates both meaning or individuality with elaborate metaphorical narratives of stereotypical behavior. In the words of E. E. Bertels, the prominent Soviet scholar of Tīmūrid-era Persian and Turkī literature, fifteenth century prose was "adorned with rhyme, overflowing with the most complex images and comparisons, sometimes obscuring the thought so much that phrases had to be re-read several times until its thought became clear."[104] Two Tīmūrid-era historians who produced widely admired works in this baroque style were Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, the author of the *Ẓafar nāmah* or *Book of Victory*, one of the two works by this title on Tīmūr's life and one which Bābur

[102] See Annette Beveridge's interesting discussion of Bābur's use of pronouns. BN-B, lix-lx.

[103] BN-M, f. 380b.

[104] Evgenii Eduardovich Bertels, *Izbrannye Trudy, Navoi i Dzhami* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1965), 45.

had read, and Khwāndamīr, the Harat historian who joined Bābur's nascent court in India in 1528.

Yazdī's notoriously baroque prose was taken as a model for historical writing by none other than Bābur's young Mongol cousin, Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat, and by many later Iranian historians who also affected his high literary style. In fact, Haydar Mīrzā, himself a member of the Turco-Mongol military class, apologized with engaging naivete for his inability to write a proper preface to his partly autobiographical history of the Mongols, and so instead simply copied the Prolegomena of Yazdī's history.[105] Written by men who had usually received a religious and literary education, works such as Yazdī's were often made more difficult for Turco-Mongol aristocrats by the profligate use of Arabic vocabulary. Khwāndamīr's massive history, the *Habīb al-siyar*, typifies this practice. In many sections the work is a Persian-language history only in terms of its grammar and the use of Persian verbs, prepositions and pronouns; the vocabulary is predominantly Arabic.

Bābur's own Turkī prose is hardly the simple spoken language of the Ferghanah countryside, but a more complex language acquired over his entire lifetime. It is full of Persian constructions and vocabulary. He typically, for example, uses series of paired adjectives or multiple synonyms that Iranian writers favored for descriptions and human characterizations. The quality of his prose also varies. It is more polished in the *Vaqā'ī*'s Ferghanah section, while many of the Kabul and Indian pages resemble diary entries. Nonetheless, Bābur's writing as a whole is still atypically direct, precise and detailed when measured by the style of Perso-Islamic historians or by the Turkī writers who emulated them. A sense of the difference between these contrasting styles is obvious when comparing Bābur's and Khwāndāmīr's narrative, an especially telling comparison as Khwāndamīr used Bābur's work to revise parts of the *Habīb al-siyar*. When, for example, Bābur describes how he reacted to the desertion of most of his men in 1498, he writes: "It was very hard on me; I wept uncontrollably."[106] In court histories emperors were not known to cry, even when only sixteen

[105] Mirza Haydar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* Persian text edited by W. M. Thackston, 4-5.

[106] BN-M, f. 55b.

years old, and Khwāndamīr relying on Bābur's original, describes this same episode by reporting: "When this untoward news [of the defections] reached the presence of the highly esteemed *pādshāh* he was saddened at the discord of the perfidious times...."[107] Each statement is correct, but Bābur's is succinct, personal and emotive, while Khwāndamīr's elaborate language masks the reality of human emotion by rendering it generically as a respectable royal response.

The contrast between Khwāndamīr's language and Bābur's, the Arabicized, stylized and impersonal quality of the first as compared with the more idiomatic, particular and individualized Turkī of the other, has many literary parallels with similar effects. One such example can be found in the contrasting styles of aristocratic women and men in medieval or Heian Japan. Japanese autobiographical diaries written by women during the ninth to twelfth centuries were composed in the elegant but colloquial patois of the aristocracy. The startling "freshness and immediacy" of these diaries and their accessibility for modern readers, is contrasted with the character of the formal Chinese that male aristocrats and officials had to master to write government documents and formal narrative histories.[108] Like Khwāndamīr writing highly Arabicized Persian in the oblique, metaphorical idiom of traditional Iranian historiography, male Japanese writers expressed themselves in the highly stylized, formal language of classical Chinese. Women were not constrained by the use of this court language; they were discouraged from learning it. Men, in contrast, were expected to express themselves in this prestigious lingua franca, with the result that they produced little of enduring humanistic value.[109]

It seems likely that Bābur's choice of language was at least partly a conscious decision, although it may also have been partly due to two other factors: his inability to write high literary prose and the natural preference of a man of affairs for lucid language. After all as Haydar Mīrzā makes clear it took special training to make the

[107] Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar* IV, 261.

[108] Wu, *The Confucian's Progress*, 13-14.

[109] Ibid., 13-14. The literary value of these formal, classical texts must, of course, be considered in the context of their times. Some may have been masterpieces of classical Chinese composition, whatever their value for human understanding.

personal impersonal, the direct indirect and the simple metaphorical. Like Ibn Buluggīn, Bābur seems to have recognized that ornate language led to the death of meaning. Thus Ibn Buluggīn writes in his introduction that "you will perceive that should the author of this book aim at producing high-sounding words and rhymed phrases, the sense would be adversely affected."[110] Bābur says something similar in his 1528 letter of advice to Humāyūn that includes, among other irritating fatherly observations, a critique of his son's prose. He sarcastically criticizes the opaque style of Humāyūn's letters by comparing it to a *muʿammā*, an enigma, a genre of poetic puzzles much favored by Tīmūrid poets of the later fifteenth century. "Whoever," writes Bābur, "saw an enigma in prose."

> You have written these letters of yours as I instructed. [Yet] you have not read [them], for if you had read [them] you would know it is impossible to understand [them] and being unable to understand you would have to alter [them]. One can read your letters with difficulty, but they are very obscure. No one has ever seen a prose enigma. Your spelling is not bad, although it is not very precise.... If one makes every effort your letters are readable, but the obscurity of your terminology is such that the meaning cannot be entirely grasped. Your laziness as a correspondent is also due to this reason [the effort required to write such prose] Your extravagant style is the reason for the obscurity. From now on write informally, clearly and cleanly. It will be less trouble both to you and to the reader.[111]

It is not merely that Bābur's prose is relatively spare, it is also precise, both in the way he uses language and in the detail of his descriptions. A case in point of the ways he uses Turkī is the opening section of the Ferghanah gazetteer, which immediately follows his opening line about inheriting the province in his twelfth year. "Ferghanah," he writes:

> Is [located] in the fifth climatic zone. It is situated on the edge of settled or cultivated [civilized] world. On its east is Kashgar; its west, Samarqand, its south, the mountains of the Badakhshan border. On its north while there were reportedly cities such as Almaligh and

[110] Tibi ed., *The Tibyān*, 34.

[111] BN-M, fs. 349a-b. For an exceptionally lucid discussion of the *muʿammā* genre see Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī, Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, Ca.: Mazda, 1998), 154-64.

> Almati and Yangi, which in the history books they write as Utrar, they are now destroyed and utterly devastated on account of the Mongols and Uzbeks.[112]

What is particularly interesting about this geography is that Bābur carefully uses the Turkī particle, *ekan dur* when discussing the cities in Ferghanah that had been destroyed. This particle conveys the idea that the narrator has not personally seen something or experienced an event, just as Bābur had never visited the region of these three cities. He is careful to use either this particle or the Turkī reported past tense to similar effect throughout the *Vaqāʾiʿ*.

Beyond this careful use of language is the remarkable attention he gives to physical descriptions of the natural world and his characterizations of people he knew. He includes some of his finest descriptions of nature in pages of his Indian gazetteer written in 1528. Typical of these is his precise account of the date palm, which is also interesting as evidence that in some parts of the *Vaqāʾiʿ* Bābur is addressing not just his sons but the literate Turkī speakers of Mawarannahr. In introducing this tree Bābur remarks that it is not peculiar to Hindustan, but that he will describe it because it is not found in those *vilāyatlar*, those provinces or countries. As Bābur specifically mentions that dates were grown in Lamghan (now Laghman), a dependent district of Kabul located just east-northeast of the city, he is presumably not using *vilāyatlar* to refer to the districts in and around the Afghan capital. Writing of the Indian date palm Bābur says with typical care:

> The branches at the top of the tree are exactly in one place. The leaves of the branches extend outward from a single stem on two sides. Its trunk is rough and ill-colored. Its fruit is like a cluster of grapes [but] much bigger than a cluster of grapes. They say that among plants the date-palm tree resembles animals in two ways. One is, that just as if animals heads are cut off they expire; if the top of a date-palm tree will be cut off, the tree will wither. Then one [other] is that just with an animal no offspring will be produced without a male, so also if a branch of the male tree is not brought to the date-palm tree, it will not produce well. The truth of these words is not known.[113]

[112] BN-M, f. 1a.
[113] BN-M, fs. 284b-285a.

Equally compelling in their extraordinary detail and color are Bābur's descriptions and characterizations of various individuals, such as his portrait of one of his Tīmūrid uncles, Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā, who in appearance was "squat, with a sparse beard, fat and rather ugly," a description that suggests an almost classic Turco-Mongol physical type, albeit one here in self-indulgent old age. Bābur goes on to give a fairly balanced account of this man. In fact, it is a remarkably even-handed characterization of a person whom he obviously found distasteful. It is a description that also serves as a helpful reminder of some common characteristics that link the Tīmūrid ruling class in the late fifteenth century with Ibn Buluggīn and Usāmah in the preceding centuries. Here we have public piety coexisting with the massive self-indulgence of an aristocratic warrior who also felt he had a cultural obligation to compose poetry. Curiously Bābur begins with a general characterization that he seems later to contradict. He reports that Mahmūd Mīrzā's "Morals and manners were good," by which he may have had in mind that "He never missed his prayers," but criticizes him for speaking slightingly of Bābur's patron saint, the Naqshbandī sūfī *shaykh* or teacher, Khwājah ʿUbaydullah Ahrār. Then he praises his administration while reviling his personal habits, always carefully indicating when he knew something only by report.

> His administration and discipline were very good. Within his province not one dirhem or one dinār was spent without his knowledge. He never ignored his *naukar*'s allowances. His gatherings, gifts, and table and court were very good. Everything was done according to rule and regulation. Neither soldier nor peasant was ever allowed to oppose any arrangement or plan which he made.
>
> Apparently he previously rode hard to the hunt; in later times he hunted with falcons. He was addicted to cruelty and debauchery. He continuously drank wine. He kept many catamites, and in his realm if there was a handsome beardless boy, he did everything possible to bring [him] and make [him] a catamite....His sons all died young from cruelty and infamous debauchery.
>
> Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā had a poetic temperament and compiled a *dīwān*, but his poetry was very feeble and insipid. To compose such poetry, it would have been better not to have composed [at all]. He was a untrustworthy person [and] was disdainful of Khwājah ʿUbaydullah [Ahrār, the Naqshbandī sūfī shaykh]. He was a heartless person and shameless. Around him he had many buffoons and shameless [people] who performed lewd, indecent acts right in the

> *dīwān* in the open... He was poorly spoken and it was difficult to understand his speech immediately.[114]

One of many character sketches that distinguish the Ferghanah section, this illustrates Bābur's taste for the kind of exquisite detail, which when applied to individuals, produces compelling portraiture that resembles Tolstoy's talent for acute characterization. That is, Bābur has a novelist's eye for telling detail similar to the ability that Isaiah Berlin notes in the Russian novelist, whom he praises as a "genius... for marvelously accurate reproduction of the irreproducible, the almost miraculous evocation of the full, untranslatable individuality of the individual."[115] Unfortunately, as is so commonly true of autobiographers, Bābur never appraised himself with the same caustic frankness he brings to character sketches of even his closest relatives.

Finally, Bābur not only fills the *Vaqā'i'* with these remarkable descriptions, but the readers' sense that they are listening to a man with an exceptionally precise mind is reinforced by his penchant for precise calculation and quantification. He displays this characteristic on many occasions, especially of course when counting troops or enumerating resources. One of the most piquant examples of this is his careful discussion of the Indian calendar and the Hindu method of keeping time. In the *vilāyatlar* or provinces, that is to say his homeland, Bābur says that there were four *fasl*s or seasons, but in Hindustan there were only three: summer, monsoon and winter. He explains that these seasons are based on lunar months, thereby requiring adjustments or the periodic addition of intercalary months. This was done, he writes, by sequentially adding an extra month to the calendar every three years, first to the monsoon season, next to the winter season, then to the summer season. Then after giving the Indian names for the months and identifying them with zodiacal signs, Bābur lists the days of the week, followed by his exquisitely minute account of Indian divisions of time.

Clearly using his homeland of Mawarannahr as the standard for comparison, Bābur prefaces his explanation by saying that in "our place" the Turkī concept of day and night or *kichagündüz*, is divided into twenty-four parts. Each of these is called by the Arabic term

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[114] BN-M, fs. 25b-26a.

[115] Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 41.

sāʿat or hour, which is in turn divided into the Arabic *daqīqah* or minute. Having said this he launches into one of his engagingly arcane calculations, illustrating how he delighted in such mental exercises for their own sake. Thus he remarks that since it took a minute to pronounce the *fātihah*, the short opening *surah* or chapter of the Quran, together with the *bismillah*, the common invocation of God's name, these verses could be recited 8,640 times in a twenty-four hour period. Following this aside he goes on to describe how Indians divide up the day. "The Hind Ilī," the Indian people," he writes, divide the [Turkī] *kichagündüz* into sixty parts known as *qārī*s, with both night and day divided into four parts called *pahar*s or "watches." Bābur then explains how time was actually announced in urban areas. "For this business of keeping time," he reports, "a group of men called *gariyālī*s are appointed in all major cities." As he further explains, these men were given two instruments for keeping time, a thick brass disk hanging on a cord, and a drinking vessel with a hole in the bottom that when placed in water took an hour to fill. Each time the vessel filled the *gariyālī*s struck the brass disk, once for the first hour of the watch, twice for the second, etc.

After describing this operation Bābur writes that he had improved the system by having the *gariyālī*s strike the appropriate number of times for the watch, just after striking the hour, so that during the night people would confuse one watch for another. "This was excellent," he says in one of his many self-congratulatory asides, and concludes with a demonstration paralleling his Islamic verbal measure of the minute by observing that the duration of the subdivision of the *qārī*, known as the *pal*, equaled the time it took to open and shut one's eyes sixty times. This meant, he calculated, that in a *kichagündüz* or twenty-four hour period, a person could open or shut his eyes 216,000 times. Or in Islamic terms the *pal* equaled the time it took to say both the Quranic phrase *qul-huwaʾ llāhī*, "Say He is God," and the *bismillah* invocation eight times, meaning you could say them both 28,800 times in a full day.[116]

On other occasions Bābur displays his taste for quantification in more trivial but more engaging matters, as when in Samarqand in 1497 he determines the circumference of the city walls by ordering

[116] BN-M, fs. 289a-b. The phrase *qul-huwa-llāhī* opens the 112th sura of the Quran.

that they be paced off—10,700 paces.[117] Later in the Kabul gazetteer he describes the Ghurband *tuman* or district and remarks on the number of flowers in the foothills. He says that he counted them and discovered there thirty-two or thirty-three unique varieties.[118] Or while on campaign in India he reports swimming across the Ganges, and notes that he counted that it took him thirty-three strokes to cross the river.[119] Yet whether applied to troops, revenue, time or flowers his penchant for recording these discussions reflects an intelligent, precise mind at work.

"Design and Truth in Autobiography"

Every characteristic that distinguishes the *Vaqāʾiʿ* from its predecessors helps to explain why it has nearly always been taken at face value and seen as a text that may be accepted on its author's own terms. The symmetry of its tripartite construction, the persuasive evocation of emotion, the direct and precise use of language, the compelling detail of its descriptions; all these traits have understandably left readers dazzled amidst dry court histories. Then there is Bābur's own repeated assertion that in writing he is telling the truth, whether about his interpretations of events or analyses of motivation and character. Such statements are the perennial claim and signature characteristic of nearly every autobiographer. Cellini makes similar statements in the *Vita,* although usually about art rather than politics.[120] Bābur insists that he is truthful principally when he wants to bolster his claims that his accomplishments exceeded those of every other Tīmūrid. When he does so the self-promoting autobiographical nature of the text is most evident.

When, for example, Bābur describes how he captured Tīmūr's

[117] BN-M, f. 44b.

[118] BN-M, f. 136a.

[119] BN-M, f. 363b.

[120] Cellini begins his life by remarking: "All men of whatsoever quality they may be, who have done anything of excellence, ought, if they be persons of truth or honesty, to describe their lives with their own hands." Symonds, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, 1. Towards the end of his autobiography Cellini does remark "If I did not confess that in some of these episodes I acted wrongly, the world might think I was not telling the truth in those in which I say I acted rightly," 299. He then admits to a minor transgression but this is the only time he makes such an admission or criticizes himself.

capital Samarqand from the Uzbeks in 1500, he compares his achievement to the capture of the Tīmūrid cultural capital of Harat thirty years earlier by Sultān Husayn Bayqara, whom he recognizes as the greatest Tīmūrid of the late fifteenth century. After demonstrating in a step-by-step comparison that his achievement far surpassed that of his illustrious older relative, Bābur concludes by writing: "No criticism of people is intended from these words. This statement was accurate as given above. I do not intend to aggrandize myself by writing this. What was written was the truth."[121] Bābur may indeed have been truthful, but he was, of course, glorifying himself. He makes a similar statement later in the narrative when describing what he regarded as a betrayal of himself by his Chingīzid relatives in Kabul in 1507. "It is the truth that is written," Bābur asserts, "...What is being documented truly happened."[122]

Bābur's claims to truthfulness raise the central question of autobiographical writing. Is his autobiography a precisely accurate history in which, as he insists, "What is being documented truly happened," or is it as many modern critics suggest really a creative work of fiction. The answer is no more simple for Bābur than it is for most other writers, because in the *Vaqā'i'* as in other such works there are many types of autobiographical truths, among others, truths of perspective, truths of emphasis and interpretation, truths of narration, that is inclusion and omission, truths of physical description. Nearly all autobiographers offer self-interested interpretations of their lives and, like Bābur, they usually do so from the perspective of old age. When as in Bābur's case no contemporary alternative sources exist that are remotely comparable in the quality of writing or the richness of detail it is easy accept what he says without question. His perspective and selectivity determine what readers think and what they know. When he offers characterizations of individuals his eye for detail and taste for pithy personality sketches delight the reader, but whether he is being fair or not is often impossible to say. His almost universally contemptuous characterization of Afghāns is one case in point. Not only does he treat the Afghān tribes in and around Kabul who refused to accept his

[121] BN-M, fs. 85b-86a.
[122] BN-M, f. 201a.

authority with exceptional brutality, but he excoriates nearly every Afghān with whom he comes into contact. Yet any reader who accepts his comments overlooks the fact that from the time Bābur took Kabul in 1504 Afghans, either as tribes in and around Kabul or as members of the Lūdī dynasty of Agra and Delhi, were his most persistent antagonists whom he fought to the end of his life. And the Afghāns then, as throughout much of their history, had no voice.

Another example is Bābur's account in which he expresses irritation with his Tīmūrid cousin Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā for not immediately showing him the respect Bābur felt he deserved when he visited Harat in December 1506. As one who had twice captured Samarqand and fought with the Uzbeks, Bābur was outraged by Badīʿ al-Zamān's grudging welcome. "It was unconscionable," Bābur writes, "to delay showing me respect."[123] The effect of Bābur's narrative and editorial is to engage the readers sympathy. Not only do readers readily accept Bābur's point of view but they share his outrage at the way he has been treated. When, therefore, at the conclusion of this passage he remarks that he both demanded and received an apology from his cousin it seems only just. This is a classic autobiographical moment. Bābur survived and these men did not. His narrative is the only record; his opinion the only surviving point of view. He immortalizes his dynastic ambition while making his cousin's touchy pride seem nothing but churlish. Even the reader may ask after reading this passage, "How could Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā have acted so ungraciously?" Never mind that Bābur's two quixotic occupations of Samarqand in 1497 and 1500 had been unmitigated disasters, not to speak of the fact that his cousin, the heir to Harat, enjoyed far higher status in the Tīmūrid world than did Bābur. No one who reads the *Vaqāʾiʿ* sympathizes with other Tīmūrids because Bābur effectively convinces them that only his ambitions are honorable, while those of others are dishonest, illegitimate or just irrelevant.

A further explicit demonstration of how Bābur could be self-serving is seen in two instances in which he describes the political role of women in Tīmūrid affairs. First, when he is narrating events in the fall of 1494 less than six months after inheriting his father's

[123] BN-M, f. 187a.

appanage in Ferghanah, Bābur mentions how his grandmother, Isen Devlat Begim, met his inner circle of advisors to squelch an incipient revolt against Bābur's still fragile authority. Commenting on her role Bābur remarks: "Among women my grandmother, Isen Devlet Begim, was an exceptional advisor and counselor. She was extremely intelligent and prudent. Most affairs were settled with her advice."[124] Even if, as he somewhat condescendingly notes, his grandmother was only the best advisor "among women," Bābur still openly acknowledges her important role in his early political life. He learned of her death in Kabul in 1505. Yet later in the Ferghanah section he denounces the political role of women in general when he describes his young Tīmūrid cousin's actions that led to the first Uzbek occupation of Samarqand in the spring of 1500.

At the time the city was held by his cousin, Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā, with whom Bābur had cooperated in 1497 to seize the city from yet another Tīmūrid cousin. After entering the city in October or November of that year Bābur had to withdraw in March 1498 when his enemies occupied his home fortress of Andijan and killed Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī, his religious tutor. Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā was left behind with a relatively small force, and in the spring of 1500 as Uzbek troops converged on the city he made some kind of agreement with their leader, Shībānī Khan. Actually Bābur says that Sultān ʿAlī's mother secretly told Shībānī Khan that if he married her, his son would exchange Samarqand for his father's old territory in northern Afghanistan—after the Uzbeks captured that area. Recounting this seemingly improbable tale with his usual convincing detail, Bābur says that when Shībānī Khan camped outside of Samarqand Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā went out to meet him accompanied by only a few men, where he was badly received, foreshadowing his execution four or five days later. Bābur then launches into a denunciation of the mother, that "unfortunate stupid woman," for whom, he writes, Shībānī cared nothing, "not even thinking of her as a concubine."[125] Yet he also excoriates poor Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā for listening to a woman's advice, remarking, "for paying attention to a woman's words, he sullied his name in the

[124] BN-M, f. 24b.
[125] BN-M, f. 80b.

annals of virtuous men."[126] Bābur must have expected his presumably male readership would nod sagely in agreement with such a homespun truism, while forgetting what he himself had written not many pages earlier about his grandmother.

Finally, an even more important example, because it is often quoted as evidence of Bābur's early but thwarted intention to invade India, is an assertion he makes shortly after describing his victory over the Afghān ruler of Delhi in April 1526. Bābur writes as if it had been his intention to conquer India from the first moment he entered Kabul in 1504, saying here in the passive tense:

> From 1504/05 when Kabul province was taken until now there was always ambition for Hindustan. [Yet] sometimes owing to the addled opinion of *beg*s and sometimes owing to the uncooperativeness of elder and younger brethren an invasion of Hindustan was not possible and its countries remained unconquered.[127]

Transparently self-serving, this statement is contradicted by the evidence of the *Vaqā'i'*. It was only the force of circumstance reinforced by the logic of geography that made Bābur reluctantly turn his ambitions from a reconquest of Mawarannahr to a conquest of India. Samarqand not India was his goal when he occupied Kabul in 1504. Kabul was only a temporary refuge until he could reclaim his ancestral homeland, a goal or at least a dream that his descendants in India nurtured until the collapse of the dynasty in the eighteenth century. In his early years in Afghanistan Bābur wanted to raid India for supplies, but when in 1511 the Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl defeated and killed Shībānī Khan Uzbek the road to Samarqand opened again, and as far as one can tell from his own text, Bābur forgot about India for the next four or five years. Taking his family north with him on a march through the Hindu Kush mountains, Bābur reoccupied Samarqand with the aid of Safavid troops. If the Uzbek coalition had not defeated him once again he would certainly have reconstituted a Tīmūrid state on Tīmūr's urban, Central Asian foundations. Yet, even after this defeat in 1512 he still did not immediately return to Kabul to prepare for an Indian invasion but instead remained in northern Afghanistan for at least another two years, apparently hoping against hope for a new opportunity to reoccupy his homeland.

[126] Ibid., f. 80b.
[127] Ibid., f. 269a.

These passages remind readers of the significance of identifying the *Vaqāʾiʿ* as an autobiography. Knowing this, no one can accept the text as a source that can be simply mined for its "facts," whether these are descriptions of political events or attributions of individual motivations. Bābur's work is distinguished by a high degree of precision, which indeed in the case of his descriptions of the natural world can sometimes be verified by later comparison. Yet, he is still an autobiographer and autobiographies usually contain not only self-promotion but "discrimination and selection in the face of the endless complexity of life, selection of facts, distribution of emphases, choice of expression." Here too the *Vaqāʾiʿ* exemplifies a characteristic of the autobiographical genre as "a ceaseless process of identity formation in which new versions of the past evolve to meet the constantly changing requirements of the self in each successive present."[128] In Bābur's case this modification of the past is most obvious when he inserts into the text a sense of piety and spiritual remorse that he experienced in his last years in India. However, one of the most valuable aspects of the *Vaqāʾiʿ* is that its unfinished state makes it possible to see Bābur's autobiographical mind at work more clearly than if he had enjoyed the leisure to produce a really polished text, free of internal inconsistencies. Given another ten years of life he might have polished out the traits of the work that enliven it with the recognizable peculiarity, complexity and uncertainty of real life, and made it resemble the formulaic products of the professional literate elite such as Khwāndamīr's, *Habīb al-siyar*.

What follows is a skeptical reading of the *Vaqāʾiʿ* and Bābur's poetry in an effort to understand his life, reconstruct his world and ultimately explain his climactic conquest. Skepticism in this case does not imply, however, the intellectual nihilism of the modern literary critic who rejects the possibility of discovering truth or discerning reality in any text, including the truth of the author's intention. Whatever else may be ambiguous in Bābur's writings, his sense of himself and the magnitude of his achievement is unmistakable. "Everyone who reads these Events will know," he writes in one of his late poems, "What grief and what sorrow and what difficulties I have seen." Beyond that the implicit evidence of the text, what

[128] Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography*, 36.

Marc Bloch would call its "unintentional" evidence, not only offers a convincing portrait of Bābur's own particular Tīmūrid mentalité, but the single most realistic record of war and politics in the pre-modern Islamic world.

One of the single most compelling aspects of this verbal landscape is that Bābur populates it with such authentic individuals as his Tīmūrid uncle, Mahmūd Mīrzā. Absent are the depersonalized stereotypes of typical Islamic narrative texts and common Western perception. If nothing else this biography may at least remind readers that in his appreciation for precise and revealing detail Bābur resembles certain Italian Renaissance authors, not merely because he composed an autobiography, but because of his "appreciation of the concrete, the specific and the unique" in people and in nature. In this respect the founder of the Tīmūrid renaissance of South Asia exhibits a cultural attitude and literary taste that at this period is typically associated in western minds solely with the "social and intellectual climate of Renaissance Florence."[129] One conclusion that emerges from reading the *Vaqā'i'* is that however distant geographically, the men and women of Florence and Samarqand resembled each other in fundamentally important ways.

[129] Gene Brucker, *Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, repr. 1983), 222. Brucker is summarizing the opinion of Paul Oskar Kristeller in his work, *Renaissance Thought: the Classic, Scholastic and Humanist Strains* (New York, N.Y.: Harper 1961).

CHAPTER TWO

THE TĪMŪRID DENOUEMENT IN MAWARANNAHR

His pearl-like nature was a station for the marks of greatness and sublimity; freedom and detachment together with lofty restraint and majestic power flashed forth in his nature; in asceticism and absorption (*faqr ū fanā*) a Junīd [sic] and Bāyazīd; while the magnificence and genius of an Alexander and of a Farīdūn shone from his brow.

Abū'l Fazl ʿAllāmī writing of Bābur in the late sixteenth century.[1]

True to their dynastic bias Tīmūrid-Mughul court historians portray Bābur as a mythical leader, a man with the prescience of Solomon and the military genius of Alexander. Bābur, however, implicitly depicts himself as a flawed if often heroic individual, a man with little political foresight and questionable military skills. Instead of describing his career as an ascending arc of preordained triumphs foretold by supernatural signs, a common motif of court historians, he characterizes his political life as a succession of unpredictable cycles of disasters and triumphs. Writing in the relative calm of Agra after his victories in north India in 1526 and 1527, he reflects that four or five times in his career he had suddenly gone from "hardship to rest and difficulties to repose."[2] Elsewhere he describes these cycles as an alternation between *fatrat*, a powerless interregnum, and *fursat*, leisure.[3] In both instances he conveys profound shifts in his political fortunes, contrasting periods of defeat, exile and powerlessness with those of victory, status and power. In more specifically political terms Bābur characterizes the extremes of these cycles as *qazaqlïq*, the status of a political vaga-

[1] AN, I, 223-24 and n. 4. Bābur, that is, was a great Muslim mystic and a quasi-mythological emperor. Farīdūn was one of the mythological monarchs of Iran. Both Junīd i.e. Junayd, and Bāyazīd were members of the Naqshbandī sūfī order into which Bābur also was born. The order is discussed below, chapter 3.

[2] BN-M, f. 96a.

[3] Bābur first uses *fatrat* in this way in fs. 8b and 9a.

bond or throneless exile, and that of *istiqlāl*, the exercise of sovereignty.[4]

It was during the decade following his father's death in 1494 that Bābur experienced the wildest swings in his political fortunes, climaxed in 1504 by his flight from Mawarannahr and occupation of Kabul. He never interprets the twists of fortune he experienced in these years. Unlike the fourteenth century Arab-Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldūn, who used Aristotelian logic to analyze the underlying causes of the political chaos in North Africa and Islamic Spain, Bābur never steps back from his often bewilderingly complex narrative of events to generalize, much less to offer structural explanations for his turbulent political history. Such explanations are easy to find, though, in two related characteristics of fifteenth century Central Asian politics: Turco-Mongol inheritance patterns and the nature of late Tīmūrid politics. With these factors in mind it is easy to understand the fundamentally unstable nature of the political world Bābur was born into and therefore took for granted, seeing no need to explain it to his intended audience of like-minded Turco-Mongol aristocrats.

Inheritance and Fragmentation

When it came to establishing political stability and centralized rule Turco-Mongol states were plagued by two inherent problems: the ambiguity of political succession and the related custom of allotting territory to sons of aristocratic and royal lineages. These problems were not peculiar to Turco-Mongol or even Central Asian steppe societies, but were found throughout the Middle East. Even after pastoral nomadic tribes founded states, evolved into sedentary societies and developed complex bureaucratic administrative systems, these inheritance patterns persisted. As was true of most Middle Eastern and Central Asian tribal people, any able bodied member of the ruling clan or family among Turco-Mongols was eligible for political leadership of a tribe or the exercise of territorial sovereignty of an urban-based empire. Implicit in this political tradition was the assumption that tribal plunder or territorial conquests were

[4] He uses *fatrat* synonymously with *qazaqlïq* in f. 11a.

the joint property of the ruling lineage.[5] The absence of an established pattern of succession meant that after a ruler's death, while in theory preference was often given to the eldest son, any son or brother or nephew could contest for power and, if successful, could legitimately rule. As a result, a ruler's death often triggered civil wars among his sons and/or other male relatives. In the context of the great Central Asian nomadic empires of Chingīz Khan and Tīmūr, the death of the founder meant respectively: the subdivision of the empire with one heir accorded superior status and internecine war among claimants as they sought to replicate the authority of the founder. Among both Chingīzids and Tīmūrids the number of legitimate claimants multiplied in succeeding generations, leading to the subdivision of authority and territory. In the late fifteenth century two or three generations of Chingīzids and Tīmūrids sometimes struggled for power at the same time. This succession problem initially plagued all the Turkic empires, and was dealt with by the Ottomans, Safavids, Uzbeks and Tīmūrid-Mughuls in distinct ways.

The conflicts inherent in this system were also encouraged and almost guaranteed by the related practice of a ruler parceling out territories among his sons, sometimes but no means always with preference given to the oldest. In an arrangement generally known to modern scholars as the appanage system, sons of a ruler were appointed at a young age, often less than ten years, to be nominal governors of provinces or subordinate fortresses. They were also assigned guardians, known among Tīmūrids as *beg atekeh*s, to advise and protect them.[6] This custom represented an ad hoc division of the father's patrimony even before his death. It usually meant that young men grew into adults having little day-to-day contact with their siblings. Whether or not brotherly love was a significant emotion in other premodern societies it had little meaning where chil-

[5] For the Uzbek case see R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia,* 51-58. The nature of leadership in a particular Iranian pastoral nomadic tribe is described in the well-known study by Fredrik Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (London: Allen and Unwin 1961). The tangled question of what the Latin term "tribe" means in the Middle Eastern and Central Asian context is discussed at length by Richard Tapper. *Frontier Nomads of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-24. Suffice to say here that neither anthropologists or historians agree on a definition, which is applied to entities ranging from fairly small pastoral nomadic camping and migratory groups to large political/military confederations.

[6] BN-A, 579-81.

dren had so little sustained contact after their earliest years. These children/young men also developed mini-courts and distinct political ambitions, as indeed was natural for them to do in the Turco-Mongol system of shared inheritance. Conflict between the sons was even more likely to occur or to be intensified when they were children of different mothers.

The existence of these separate power centers frequently gave rise to chronic instability even during a ruler's lifetime, as sons rebelled against fathers and fought among themselves. That is, not only did conflicts occur between various appanages, but between fathers and sons of the individual appanages themselves. The experience of the last Tīmūrid ruler of Harat, Sultān Husayn Bayqara (r.1469-1506), typified this problem. During the last decade of his life he spent more energy suppressing his rebellious adult sons, nominally his subordinate governors, than he did in campaigning against the Uzbeks, his most formidable enemy. Bābur experienced many of these difficulties with his two younger half-brothers, Jahāngīr and Nāsir Mīrzā, even though they were only nine and seven years old respectively in 1494 when he nominally assumed control of his father's state. However, their deaths in 1506-07 and 1515 meant that he was spared the potential problem of their ambitions after he conquered north India.

Tīmūr himself was heir to the Turco-Mongol traditions, and did not modify them in any significant way. He began his career and ended his life as a leader of a nomadic conquest dynasty. While he used Iranians particularly to help him create an effective financial administration, he never attempted to transcend Turco-Mongol political traditions by creating a new Tīmūrid legitimacy modeled on autocratic Iranian or Chinese models.[7] At no time, for example, did he exploit the ideology of Iranian kingship that was so familiar in Mawarannahr and proclaim himself *shāh*. Nor did he create institutional structures for a bureaucratic Tīmūrid state that might subordinate or suppress his descendants' individual ambitions. Tīmūrid lineages rather than a cohesive Tīmūrid state ruled fifteenth century Mawarannahr and Khurasan. Indeed, Tīmūr's name was the most enduring political legacy he bequeathed to his children and grandchildren, but it did not distinguish one male

[7] Beatrice Manz describes Tīmūr's use of Iranian bureaucrats—and his contempt for them as a class or ethnic group. *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, 109-15.

relative from another. All had an equal theoretical claim to be his legitimate successor.[8] Nor had Tīmūr allowed any member of his family to acquire significant independent power that might have guaranteed the supremacy of one family member over all the rest. He had ruled personally through the draconian use of force, and did not trust even his own immediate relatives enough to ensure their control over the provinces they ruled in his name.[9]

The exact moment Tīmūr died in 1405 his empire fractured, as his descendants struggled for control of his conquests in Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan.[10] During the century following Tīmūr's death and the end of Tīmūrid rule in Harat in 1506 there were periods of stability and impressive cultural florescence in the central Tīmūrid lands of Mawarannahr and Khurasan.[11] This is particularly true of the nearly four decades from 1409 to 1447 when Tīmūr's fourth son, Shāh Rukh, reigned in Harat and Shāh Rukh's son, Ulugh Beg, ruled as his deputy in Samarqand. Yet in the latter half of the century the situation of Tīmūr's descendants steadily deteriorated as local dynasties in Iran overthrew Tīmūrid sovereignty and the proliferation of Tīmūrid descendants fractionalized political power and scarce resources. It is possible that the progressive reduction of the weight of the principal Tīmūrid silver coin, the *tangah* was due to this fragmentation.[12] By the late fifteenth century the Tīmūrids' weakened, divided states permitted the advance of

[8] Maria Eva Subtelny, "Bābur's Rival Relations: A Study in Kinship and Conflict in 15th-16th Century Central Asia", 102-118.

[9] Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, 18 and Manz, "The legacy of Tīmūr," *Asian Art* 2, 2 (Spring, 1989), 10-29. See also Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 125-26 for a description of the lack of a dynastic tradition in the Mongol empire, and Peter Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), chapters IX and X.

[10] As testified to near Tabriz on 25 March 1405 by the Castillian ambassador to Tīmūr, Ruy González de Clavijo, who was then returning from his audience with Tīmūr in Samarqand. E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power ed., *Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-06* Guy Le Strange trans. (N.Y. and London: Harper, 1928), 311-315. R. M. Savory describes the aftermath of Tīmūr's death in Iran in his article, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Tīmūr," *Der Islam* 40, 1 (1964), 35-65.

[11] See especially Lentz and Lowrey, *Tīmūr and the Princely Vision* Persian art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century.

[12] Elena A. Davidovich, "The Monetary Reform of Muhammad Shībānī Khān in 913-914/1507-08," 135.

the Chingīzid-led Uzbek confederation from Turkistan in the west and Mongol intrusions from Mughulistan east of Ferghanah, across the Tien Shan mountains. Writing of the 1490's Bābur reported destruction by both groups north of Andijan where Tīmūrid control had evaporated. "Because of the Mughuls and Uzbeks," he writes, "not a single village in that region is without a fort."[13]

Thus when in 1494 Bābur became in his anachronistic terms "*pādshāh* in the province of Ferghanah" in his twelfth year, he became in reality no more than a young and vulnerable claimant to a minor Tīmūrid appanage. In fact he was not a *pādshāh* at this time, a Iranian title he himself says he assumed only in 1506 after taking Kabul. Instead he was but one of numerous male descendants of Tīmūr and Chingīz Khan who possessed similar dynastic ambitions and comparable Turco-Mongol legitimacy. These men were the *mīrzā*s and *khan*s respectively of his memoir.[14] In the presence of multiple Tīmūrid *mīrzās* and Chingīzid *khans* descent offered little more than legitimacy, a kind of passive charisma. It guaranteed admission to dangerous and frequently deadly political contests, and also represented a kind of life-saving political insurance in perilous times, attracting support in situations where pretentious "commoners" might be abandoned and lose their lives. The fundamental reality of late fifteenth century politics in Central Asia was the absence of a political system that could moderate or unite these men's political ambitions. No factor, neither kinship, nor religion, nor language, nor age, nor love of chess or poetry or drink, nor nostalgia for past glories—nor any shared social connection, cultural characteristic or personal habit—ensured lasting political cooperation among them.

Blood ties were nonetheless critically significant. As far can be ascertained from fragmentary evidence, the core of each *mīrzā*'s and *khan*'s entourage, his *uruq* or household, contained many of his near and distant relatives and long-time retainers, who often became linked with each other or with Tīmūrids and Chingīzids by marriage.[15] Bābur and others also invoked family connections when seeking aid or alliances. In 1502, for example, when he was virtu-

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[13] BN-M, f. 59b.

[14] *Mīrzā* from *amīrzādah*, an *amīr*'s son. Tīmūr held the title of *amīr* rather than khan, as he was not a Chingīzid.

[15] *Uruq* had two meanings for Bābur, his household and/or his baggage train. See BN-A, 659-661.

ally a refugee in Ferghanah Bābur pointedly mentions that he sought help from his Mongol uncle, Mahmūd Khan of Tashkent, because the Khan was not a *yat*, a stranger, but a *tuqqan*, a relation.[16] This was only one of several times he sought the Khan's help because of their family connection. Bābur also pointedly reminds his readers of times when he acted for the greater dynastic good or merely compassionately out of kinship considerations. He mentions, for example, that after he occupied Kabul in 1504 he helped all of his Chaghatay kin who came to him—"out of compassion and family feeling I gave Shāh Begim," he writes of one of his maternal grandfather's wives, "Pamghan, one of Kabul's best districts.[17] "Compassion and family feeling" may express the principal motives of such acts that combined a vital moral ideal, a natural sympathy and charitable impulse for relatives, with the political instinct to bolster legitimacy by demonstrating an ability to provide for members of the lineage or dynasty. When he or other Tīmūrid or Chaghatay family members were absolutely helpless they often found at least temporary refuge with their relatives. However, when any of these men enjoyed a measure of sovereignty or could reasonably hope to achieve it, kinship more usually triggered conflict rather than cooperation.

Due to this unstructured, atomized environment the late Tīmūrid political world was a truly chaotic one, chaotic in the modern mathematical and physical sense of being unpredictable. It was distinguished by a kind of Brownian motion of numerous, sometimes multitudinous Turco-Mongol offspring, colliding with one another's dynastic ambitions and veering off in unpredictable geographic and political directions.[18] Bābur summarized the essence of this ruthlessly individualistic political world when he observed of the political situation in 1506, two years after he seized Kabul, "As this was a world full of discord, anyone who was aggressive could

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[16] BN-M, f. 101a.

[17] BN-M, f. 200b. "Pamghan" in the text but later generally spelled Paghman.

[18] See C. Dyke, "Strange Attraction, Curious Liaison: Clio Meets Chaos," in T*he Philosophical Forum* 21, 4 (Summer, 1990), 369-92, and Stephen H. Kellert, *In the Wake of Chaos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Charles Melville describes an equally chaotic situation in early fourteenth century Iran that followed the collapse of the Il-Khans, the Mongol dynasty of Iran. *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37: A decade of discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1999).

seize anything from a province or a people."[19] "We also," he goes on to say with characteristic frankness, "imposed tribute and took something from the Turks and Mongols of those mountain regions."[20] He did fail to note, because it was understood among his audience, that "anyone" had to be someone of good lineage, in his eyes a Tīmūrid *mīrzā* or a Chaghatay *khan.*

The Turco-Mongol Landscape in 1494

When Bābur was born in 1483 five Tīmūrids still held most of Mawarannahr, the contiguous region of Khurasan to the west-southwest and Kabul and eastern Afghānistān. Four of these men were Bābur's paternal uncles, descendants of Tīmūr's third son, Mīrānshāh. As is shown both by their military actions and the coinage they sometimes produced, they were independent rulers within appanages granted them by Bābur's paternal grandfather, Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā Mīrānshāhī.[21] The appanages are usually identified as *soyurghals*, tax-free, military-feudal territorial grants.[22]

[19] BN-M, f. 185a.

[20] Ibid., f. 185a.

[21] John E. Woods has identified members of various Tīmūrid descent lines in *The Tīmūrid Dynasty* Papers on Inner Asia No. 14 (Bloomington, Indiana: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1990). Elena A. Davidovich mentions the copper coinage minted in Andijan, Bābur's own appanage in the Ferghanah valley. Davidovich, *Istoriya Denezhnogo Obrashcheniya Srednevekovoī Sredneī Azii*, (Moskva: "Nauka," 1983), 190.

[22] For a brief but lucid description of the *soyurghal* institution see H. R. Roemer, "The Successors of Tīmūr," CHIr, 6, 131. One of the earliest but still one of the most complete and erudite discussions of the *soyurghal* and other territorial/land assignments is I. P. Petrushevskiī's article "K Istorii Instituta Soīurgala," in V. V. Struve ed. et al, *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* (Moskva, Leningrad: Izdatelʿstvo Akademii Nauk, 1949), 227-46. See also Maria Eva Subtelny, "Socioeconomic Basis of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids," 479-505. In Iran at least *soyurghals* are generally regarded as an evolution of the earlier *iqtāʿ* grants described by Ann K. S. Lambton, "The *ʿiqtāʿ: State Land and Crown Land*," in Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia* (London: Tauris, 1988), 97-129. These grants are often distinguished from generally smaller, taxable assignments known as *tiyūl.* However, there is a great deal of debate about the meaning of these terms in Iran and Central Asia in the Tīmūrid and Safavid eras. Vladimir Minorsky speaking of Safavid Iran says the *tiyūl* commonly granted corresponded to the earlier *iqtāʿ*. *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk*, 28. Minorsky says that in Iran the *soyurghal* had been used in pre-Safavid times as a semi-permanent land grant for military purposes but that in the Safavid period it became connected more with religious endowments, as

These men and their territories were: Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā (1451-1494), the nominal governor of Tīmūrid Mawarannahr, but in reality the ruler of little more than Tīmūr's capital Samarqand and sometimes neighboring Bukhara; Bābur's father, ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā (1456-1494), the ruler of the rich Ferghanah valley east of Samarqand; Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā (1453-95), who until 1494 controlled territories along the upper Oxus, including Hisar, Termez, Qunduz and Badakhshan and Ulugh Beg Kābulī, the ruler of Kabul until his death in 1502. In addition to these four Mīrānshāhī brothers a fifth Tīmūrid, Sultān Husayn Bayqara, a descendant of Tīmūr's first son, ʿUmar Shaykh, controlled the second half of the remaining Tīmūrid lands, not only Iranian Khurasan, with its splendid cultural center of Harat, but also the territory stretching from Khwarazm below the Aral Sea to Qandahar in central Afghanistan.

In addition to these independent and perennially feuding Tīmūrid rulers, the descendants of two Chingīzid lineages contested for power in Mawarannahr and Khurasan in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. One of these Chingīzid lineages was represented by the sons of Bābur's maternal grandfather, Yūnas Khan. He was a descendant of Chingīz Khan's second son, Chaghatay. In the thirteenth century Chaghatay had ruled much of the Central Asian territory located between the Mongol states of China and Iran. However, in the immediate years before his death in Tashkent in 1487, Yūnas Khan controlled only the western part of Mughulistan, the vast swath of territory between the oasis cites of Mawarannahr and north China where Turco-Mongol nomadic and semi-nomadic steppe culture still flourished in the late fifteenth century.[23] Two of Yūnas Khan's sons, and therefore Bābur's maternal

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also happened in Tīmūrid-Mughul India. *Soyurghal* is a Mongol term, *tiyūl* Persian, and *iqtaʿ* Arabic. It cannot be assumed that the terms were used in India or Iran in mutually exclusive ways. According to Lambton, "Under the Tīmūrids, the *soyūrghāl* in the sense of a provincial grant was not clearly distinguished from the *tuyūl* [q.v.], Both were used to signify the grant of a district or provincial government or its taxes, with or without immunities." Ann K. S Lambton "Soyūrghāl," EI2, 9, 732.

[23] Chaghatay Khan's *ulus* or inherited territories included a large part of Central Asia, but in the mid-fourteenth century the former lands of the Chaghatay khanate were divided into Tīmūrid lands in the west, roughly the territories of the former Soviet Central Asian republics, and Mughulistan in the east. For the status and history of this eastern section of the former khanate or Chaghatay (Mongol) *ulus* see among other sources: O. F. Akimushkin, "Khronologiya Praviteleī Vosto-

uncles, were major figures in Bābur's early political struggles. They were Sultān Mahmūd Khan (d. 1509), who became the ruler of Tashkent after his father's death. He was the *tuqqan* or relation with whom Bābur took refuge in 1502. His younger brother and therefore another of Bābur's maternal uncles, Sultān Ahmad Khan (Kichik or Alachah Khan) (d. 1504), sometimes joined forces with Sultān Mahmūd Khan. He was the ruler of Aqsu and neighboring regions of the Altï Shahr (Six Cities) country in central and eastern Mughulistan along the southern skirt of the Tien Shan mountains, about four hundred miles and thirty-five days journey east-northeast of Andijan.[24] Ahmad Khan had gone to Mughulistan in 1485, says Bābur's cousin, Haydar Mīrzā, in the same year when the then elderly Yūnas Khan settled in Tashkent. This was two years after Bābur's birth in the nearby Ferghanah valley.[25] At that time Mughulistan was still a region whose Mongol inhabitants, in Haydar Mīrzā's words, "hated cities."

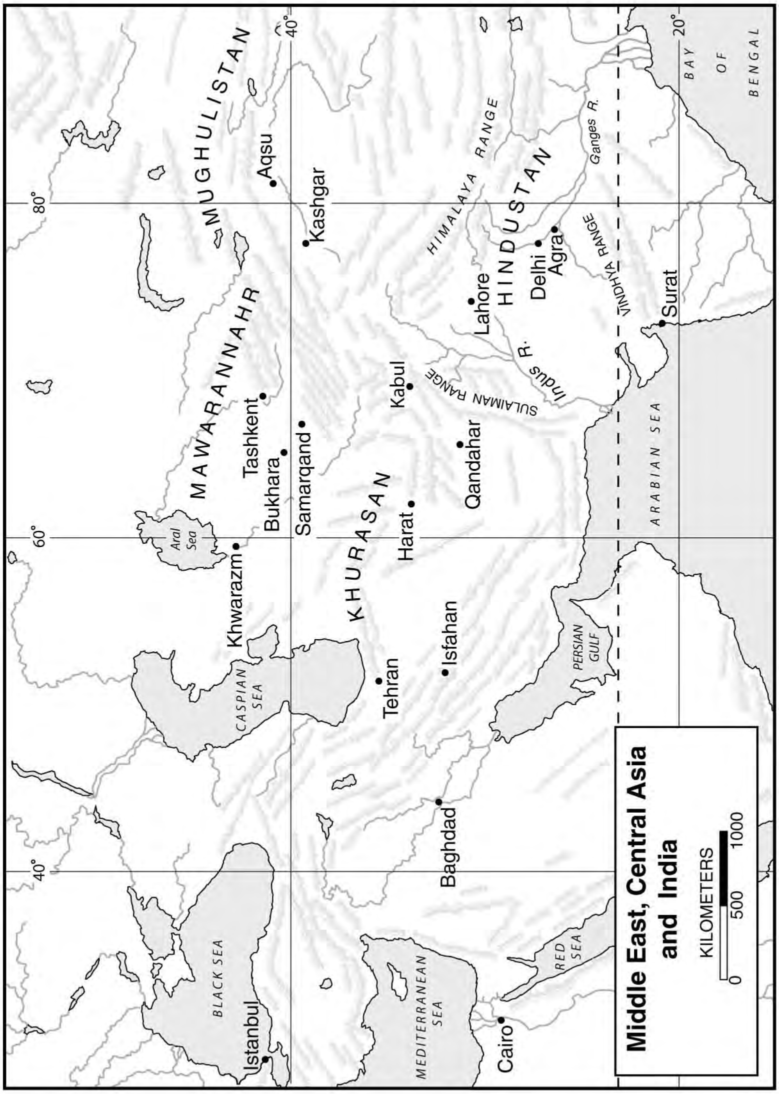
These two Chaghatay Khāns, Mahmūd and Ahmad, were in turn intermarried with members of another Mongol but non-Chingīzid clan, the Dughlats, whose leaders had been appointed amīrs of Kashgar by Chingīz's son, Chaghatay.[26] The relations between their lineages typified the shifting alliances of all the Tīmūrids, Chingīzids and non-Chingīzid Mongols. In 1494 Kashgar, about 200 miles or twenty days journey east-southeast of Andijan, was held independently by Abā Bakr Kashgarī Dughlat, who had ruled there since 1480-81. However, other Dughlats served or

chnoī Chasti Chaghataīskovo Ulusa," B. A. Litvinskii. *Vostochnyī Turkistan i Srednyaya Aziya* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1984), 156-64 and Eiji Mano, "Moghūlistān," in Haneda Akira ed., *Acta Asiatica* 41 (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 1981), 46-60. A lucid description of the khanate, its division into Tīmūr's conquests and Mughulistan and the relation of Tīmūr and the Tīmūrids to the Chaghatay Mongols in Mugulistan is the article by Hodong Kim, "The Early History of the Moghul Nomads: the Legacy of the Chaghatay Khanate," in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan ed., *The Mongols Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, Brill, 1999), 290-318. The conservative Mongol values of Mongols in these eastern territories is discussed, along with their relations with the partly Sinicized Mongols of Yüan dynasty, the Mongol dynasty of China, by John W. Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians, Aspects of Political Change in Late Yüan China* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1973).

[24] TR-T, f. 205b.

[25] TR-T, fs. 41-2.

[26] TR-R, p. 48-9 and 99 and Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, 46.



Map No. 1
Middle East, Central Asia, Afghanistan and India

allied themselves with the Chaghatay khans, and Abā Bakr Kashgarī Dughlat's cousin, Muhammad Husayn Dughlat, was Sultān Mahmūd Khan's governor of the Tashkent region when ʿUmar Shaykh died and Bābur inherited his father's appanage. One of these Dughlats was Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat, a sometime companion of Bābur and himself the author of the semi-autobiographical Persian history of the Mongols, the *Tārikh-i Rashīdī.*

The other Chingīzid lineage was represented by Muhammad Shībānī Khan (d. 1510), who traced his descent from Chingīz Khān's eldest son, Jüchi. Shībānī Khan, as he is generally known, had inherited and revitalized the largely Turkic tribal confederation known in the late fifteenth century as the Uzbeks, which his grandfather, Abū'l Khayr Khan, had formed in the fifteenth century on the Qipchaq steppe, an enormous territory stretching from the Volga to the Aral Sea. He was an enemy to both the Tīmūrids and Chaghatay Mongols, and by the late fifteenth century Shībānī Khan was moving on the wealthy cities of Mawarannahr: Bukhara, Samarqand and Tashkent. Abū'l Khayr Khan had directly intervened in Tīmūrid politics in 1451 when he helped Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā Mīrānshāhī seize Samarqand by joining him in a battle against his Tīmūrid rivals, but by 1500 his grandson, Shībānī Khan, was intent on conquest rather than intervention. His ambitions also included the wealthy region of Khurasan. By 1506 he had conquered both Mawarannahr and Khurasan and killed or driven out both Tīmūrids and Chaghatays from these regions.

During their lives Bābur's father, ʿUmar Shaykh, three other Tīmūrids, Ahmad Mīrzā of Samarqand, Mahmūd Mīrzā of Badakhshan, Husayn Mīrzā of Harat, and the Chaghatay Mongol Mahmūd Khan of Tashkent, coexisted in a hostile equilibrium within Mawarannahr and Khurasan. Ulugh Beg Kābulī seems to have remained in his eastern Afghan appanage and taken little part in the struggles with his brothers and cousins in Mawarannahr and Khurasan. With the exception of Ulugh Beg each of them, however, periodically tried to expand his power at the expense of the others, but none seemed to have conducted sustained campaigns aimed at destroying their rivals. Many of their "battles" amounted to little more than indecisive cavalry skirmishes.

Bābur suggests the almost dilatory military life these men led when he remarks that ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā fought only three significant battles, one of which he describes as no more than a skir-

mish. ʿUmar Shaykh fought two of these battles against his close relatives: one against Yūnas Khan, Mahmūd and Ahmad Khan's father—who was of course ʿUmar Shaykh's father-in-law and Bābur's maternal grandfather—and a second with his elder brother Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā of Samarqand. He fought a third skirmish against some Uzbek raiders, as the latter had begun penetrating Tīmūrid lands in Mawarannahr during his lifetime. Bābur also reports that Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā fought two of his four major battles against his brother ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā and his son-in-law, Sultān Mahmūd Khan. Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā, whose territories were located south of his two brothers, and bordered on Khurasan, fought both of his major engagements against his cousin, Sultān Husayn Mīrzā Bayqara of Harat.

These Tīmūrids and the Mongol Mahmūd Khan never seriously tried to annihilate the others, perhaps because they had become comfortable urbanites who no longer possessed the all consuming will to power of Tīmūr and Chingīz Khan. Only Shībānī Khan possessed even a measure of Chingīz's and Tīmūr's ruthless discipline and seemingly inexhaustible thirst for conquest. By the time of Bābur's birth the entire Tīmūrid and Chaghatay world of Mawarannahr and Khurasan had reached a kind of stasis of sedentary, middle aged rulers. Bābur might write judgementally of his father, ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā, that he was an exceptionally ambitious man, always seeking territorial expansion, one who "changed many truces into a battles and many friendships into enmity."[27] Yet if ʿUmar Shaykh, as Bābur also says, fought only three major battles, and never seized Samarqand or any other major city, he hardly seems to have been the model of relentless Tīmūrid ferocity. In fact, Bābur remembers him as a man who had grown so plump that he had to suck in his stomach in order to tie his tunic.[28]

Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā, ʿUmar Shaykh's older brother and periodic foe, had himself grown fat by the 1490's and, Bābur implies, had abandoned campaigning in favor of pheasant hunting and falconry.[29] Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā was also fat, drank continually and kept catamites. His sons, Bābur reports, were also infamously debauched. Neither he nor Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā, Bābur notes, had

[27] BN-M, f. 7b.
[28] BN-M, f. 7.
[29] BN-M, f. 19a.

themselves ever fought really serious battles. Less is known of the personality of Bābur's maternal uncle, Sultān Mahmūd Khan, the Chaghatay Mongol ruler of Tashkent, but he too seems to have lapsed into a satisfied inertia, not surprising given the civilized tastes his father, Yūnas Khan, had acquired during nearly two decades of exile in Iran.[30] Bābur says of Mahmūd Khan that he had good "manners and morals," (*akhlāq u atvār*) but was a hopeless horseman and general.[31] Certainly his Mongol uncle offered little sustained resistance to Shībānī Khan Uzbek when the latter overran Mawarannahr in the first decade of the sixteenth century. After losing a major battle to Shībānī Khan in 1503 he pathetically surrendered to the Uzbek leader in 1508/09, who had him and his sons executed.

In Bābur's account at least, many Tīmūrid rulers and even Mahmūd Khan seem to have personified Ibn Khaldūn's model of dynastic decay, in which the historian argued that North African and other nomadic dynasties inevitably deteriorated after seizing power. Ibn Khaldūn believed that the social cohesion and ferocity nomads naturally had in the desert or steppe inevitably atrophied after they conquered sedentary populations and occupied their cities—due to intermarriage, the decline of military experience and the pursuit of pleasure. The deterioration became ever more marked in the generations of leaders that succeeded the founder, until they became incapable of defending themselves. Ibn Khaldūn argued that after four or five generations new, more primitive, cohesive and dynamic nomads replaced degenerate dynasties, just as Uzbeks eventually defeated Bābur and overran other Tīmūrid political remnants and Mongol *khan*s in late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Central Asia.[32]

Bābur was particularly censorious about what he saw as the atrophy of Sultān Husayn Bayqara's warrior ethos, for the Sultān was the most prestigious Tīmūrid ruler of the age. Bābur's explanation for what he saw as Husayn Bayqara's marked decline in power seems almost to be written as an illustration of how Ibn Khaldūn's model could be applied to Khurasan and Central Asia, if not in all respects at least in terms of the rulers' progressive loss of ambition,

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[30] TR-T, fs. 61b-62a.

[31] BN-M, f. 54b.

[32] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* Franz Rosenthal trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, repr. 1980), 3 v.

dynamism and ferocity. Indeed, his critique of Husayn Bayqara, and the implications that the critique has for his characterization of other Tīmūrid and even Chaghatay Mongol rulers, is the closest he comes to offering his readers a structural analysis of the causes of the Tīmūrid and Chaghatay collapse in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Bābur's critique does not explain the political fragmentation of the region, but it does suggest or argue that this fragmentation was not the sole reason why Tīmūrid *mīrzā*s and Chaghatay *khan*s were unable to resist Uzbek expansion.

In Bābur's view Husayn Bayqara's decline began virtually as soon as he captured Harat in 1469. According to Bābur, when he seized the city following years of struggle, Husayn Bayqara no longer had the taste for the "anguish and effort of generalship and conquest."[33] His failure of will inevitably led, Bābur argues, to the loss of support, since men who were paid from campaign booty left in search of more productive patrons.[34] Second, instead of productive campaigns he "did nothing night and day," Bābur writes, "but revel and carouse,"[35] indulging in "*fesq o fujūr*," immorality and debauchery," and by his example teaching his sons and followers to do likewise. Bābur's comments are startling, because they represent the kind of analysis of underlying causes that is rarely to be seen in the Persian-language historiography of the period, or in the historiography of most periods of Islamic history for that matter. And while he does not explicitly discuss the notion of generational decline that is central to Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, it is implicit in his comments about the example of Husayn Bayqara's conduct and in Bābur's description of the military ineptitude of Husayn Bayqara's sons. Thus Bābur appreciated his cousins' elegant parties when he visited cosmopolitan Harat in 1506, including their ability to carve roasted fowl, a social skill he did not possess—or probably did not even realize until then that he lacked. Still he could not refrain from observing these men were almost incapable of rousing themselves to lead counterattacks against the Uzbeks, following Shībānī Khan's attack on Balkh in northern Afghanistan in the autumn of that year. He lamented that "While these *mīrzā*s were excellent conversationalists and possessed social graces they were strangers to command, strategy, brave acts and the tumult of bat-

[33] BN-M, f. 166a.
[34] Ibid., f. 166a.
[35] Ibid., f. 166a.

tle."[36] Whatever one may think about the fairness of Bābur's criticism of Husayn Bayqara, who had died earlier in 1506 before Bābur arrived in Harat, his evaluation of his cousins was based on first-hand experience and his knowledge of their pathetic inability to defend Harat when Shībānī Khan arrived before the city in 1507.

Still his comments about Sultān Husayn Bayqara's decadence, which he includes in the Kabul section of the *Vaqā'i'*, have to be treated cautiously, for in making them he seems to have been reacting specifically to the great man's failure to challenge the Uzbeks during the last six years of his life from 1500 to 1506. Bābur was especially bitter that Husayn Bayqara failed to aid him in 1500, when he was besieged by Shībānī Khan inside Samarqand, and he was exasperated by Husayn Bayqara's later strategy to offer no more than a static defense against Uzbek campaigns south of the Amu Darya river. In his critique Bābur does not distinguish between the Husayn Bayqara of 1475 or 1485 and the Husayn Bayqara of 1500 or 1506. Nor does he take into account the factors of age and illness. Certainly Bābur does not seem to be consistent in his portrayal. Just a few pages before he describes Husayn Bayqara's lassitude and indulgence, for example, he specifically mentions the Harat ruler's bravery and frequent battles![37] Even before that in the Ferghanah section he describes him as an "intelligent *mīrzā* and an "experienced commander" in the course of recounting his attack on Hisar in 1495.[38] Yet, at the end of this section Bābur bemoans the fact that the attack was never vigorously pursued and that ultimately Husayn Bayqara returned to Harat with very little to show for his efforts. In fact, like many of his other character sketches, Bābur's frequent but scattered references to Husyan Bayqara together comprise a complex portrait, one that has to be considered in any overall evaluation of late Tīmūrid Harat. In fact it is a largely a positive, admiring portrait of an individual whom Bābur, like subsequent historians, saw as indisputably the greatest Tīmūrid ruler of the age. Ultimately readers have to conclude that in his Ibn Khaldūn-like explanation for the collapse of Tīmūrid Harat Bābur identified a fundamental problem, but not one that he

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[36] BN-M, f. 187b.
[37] Ibid., f. 164b.
[38] BN-M, f. 33.

meant to stand as an overall condemnation of Husayn Bayqara or his era. It was both a lament and an explanation for the end of the Tīmūrid century. Indeed, as will be seen later, Bābur himself, like Ibn Khaldūn, reveled in the urban society and culture that both men understood to be a cause of dynastic decline.

The relatively comfortable late Tīmūrid world that had existed when Bābur was born disintegrated as his father's generation of rulers died between 1494 and 1506, and their sons fought to establish themselves in the new and unforgiving political environment of Uzbek expansion. First in Mawarannahr ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā suddenly died in 1494 at age thirty-nine, characteristically not in battle, but when his dovecote collapsed and toppled over the side of his fortress wall at Akhsi into a ravine. He left behind three sons, Bābur and his two younger half-brothers, Jahāngīr and Nāsir Mīrzā, and five daughters. Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā of Samarqand died the same year, leaving five daughters, two sons having died in infancy. Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā, his uncontested successor to Samarqand died in 1495, just five months after inheriting the city—Bābur thought debauchery was the cause! He left five sons—Sultan ʿAlī Mīrzā, Sultān Masʿūd Mīrzā, Baysunghur Mīrzā, Sultān Husayn Mīrzā, Sultān Ways Mīrzā—and eleven daughters. The death of ʿUmar Shaykh followed so soon by his two brothers first triggered a struggle for ʿUmar Shaykh's Ferghanah appanage and then escalated into a generalized competition among these men's descendants and the Chaghatays and Uzbeks for Samarqand and all Mawarannahr.

Sultān Husayn Bayqara and his sons did not intervene in the civil wars among his Mīrānshāhī Tīmūrid cousins, either before or after Shībānī Khan Uzbek occupied Samarqand and then eradicated Tīmūrid and Chingīzid presence in the region. There may have been several reasons for their inaction. The Tīmūrid world had been divided between Mawarannahr and Khurasan since the mid-fifteenth century, and Sultān Husayn Bayqara may have regarded these regions as two distinct states. He may also have been too distracted by conflicts with his sons to mount other campaigns. Thus in May 1497 when Bābur was besieging Samarqand Husayn Bayqara was campaigning against his son, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā, in northern Afghānistān. Then there is the question of his age, health and the general lassitude Bābur says had long characterized both Husayn Bayqara and his sons. Whatever the actual weight of

these factors neither Husayn Bayqara nor his sons ever marched on Samarqand after 1494, and by the time Husayn Bayqara died in Harat in 1506 the Uzbeks had occupied Mawarannahr and Bābur had fled to Kabul. His death effectively ended Tīmūrid rule in Khurasan, for none of his many sons either singly or in concert seriously attempted to counter the Uzbeks. These included his most influential sons, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muzaffar Mīrzā, who had repeatedly rebelled against their father during his lifetime, and now retired to enjoy, very briefly, the good life in cosmopolitan Harat, and three other of Husayn Bayqara's fourteen mature sons who were still active in 1506 and had small appanages north and northwest of Harat: Abū'l Muhsin Mīrzā (Merv), Ibn-i Husayn Mīrzā (Tun & Qa'in) and Kipik Mīrzā (Muhammad Muhsin Mīrzā) (Mashad).[39]

"Pādshāh" to Qazaq I: 1494-1498

When Bābur inherited his father's appanage in his twelfth year in June, 1494 his nobles immediately feared Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā might take the opportunity to send an army to capture Bābur in Andijan and occupy Ferghanah province.[40] His uncle did rouse himself long enough to march into the Ferghanah valley to do exactly that. The fact that Bābur was not only Ahmad Mīrzā's nephew but had become engaged to one of his uncle's four daughters during a visit to Samarqand seven years earlier, merely serves as a further reminder of the limited degree to which kinship influenced political decisions.[41] Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's troops captured several major fortresses between Samarqand and Andijan that ʿUmar Shaykh had controlled during his lifetime, before camping

[39] Like Mashad, Tun and Qa'in were in Khurasan. See W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran* Svat Soucek trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) for their locations.

[40] Historically, that is as early as the second century B. C., Ferghanah had been an agrarian area, where both rice and wheat were grown. However, it was also a region famous for its horses, some of which are represented in Chinese paintings. In fact, records of Chinese emissaries are the oldest extant descriptions of the valley. See Burton Watson trans., *Records of the Grand Historian of China. The Shih chi of ssu-ma ch'ien*, II, The Age of the Emperor Wu, 140-circa 100 B.C. (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1961).

[41] BN-M, f. 20a.

about eight miles to the west of Bābur's base in Andijan fort. After Bābur's offer to rule in Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's name was rejected by his uncle's nobles, the Samarqand army pressed on.

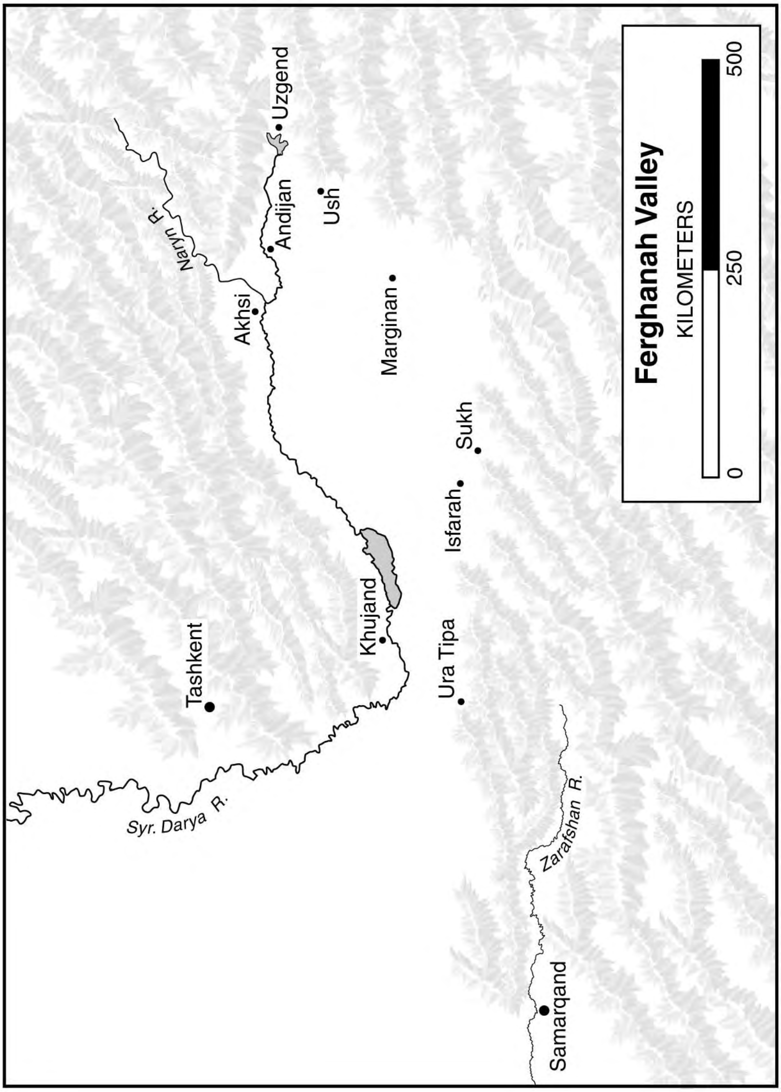
Simultaneously Bābur's Chaghatay Mongol uncle, Sultān Mahmūd Khan of Tashkent, Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's old ally against ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā's ambitions, entered Ferghanah from the west. Aided by the defection of two of ʿUmar Shaykh's Mongol *beg*s, including Nāsir Mīrzā's *beg atekeh*, Ways Laghari, Mahmūd Khan quickly occupied Kasan where Bābur's younger half-brother, Nāsir Mīrzā, still resided. Ways Laghari for unexplained reasons then took his charge to Samarqand. Mahmūd Khan then moved on to besiege Akhsi, ʿUmar Shaykh's former fortress. The Mongol ruler of Kashghar, Abā Bakr Dughlat Kashgarī, decided he too would take advantage of ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā's death to expand across the mountains into Ferghanah and besieged Uzgend, at the eastern end of the valley. However, Bābur's supporters fought Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā to a draw before Andijan; he died in July during the march back to Samarqand. They also succeeded in repulsing Sultān Mahmūd Khan near Akhsi; then the Khan fell ill and retired to Tashkent.[42] Turning their forces east Bābur's loyal amīrs then chased Abā Bakr Dughlat back across the mountains to Kashgar. While the eleven and half year old Bābur and his guardians had lost control of significant fortresses in the western section of the valley, he had survived. He might have regained control of his father's entire appanage and perhaps ruled there securely for at least another five years if the deaths in quick succession of his two uncles and the ensuing rivalry of his cousins, Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā's sons, had not catalyzed his ambition to capture Samarqand.

Bābur spent the campaign season in 1495, the late spring, summer and fall, trying to consolidate his control over the Ferghanah valley, first suppressing a revolt of the commander of Isfarah, a fortress town west-southwest of Andijan in April and May. In his sometimes excruciatingly detailed narrative Bābur reports that after this initial success he decided to seek a reconciliation with Sultān Mahmūd Khan and went to meet him near his capital, Tashkent.

Bābur's description of this encounter is one his many anecdotes that offer insight into the nature of political realities at this period,

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[42] BN-M, f. 17b. See BN-M, fs. 16b-18a for a summary of the military movements immediately after ʿUmar Shaykh's death.



Map No. 2. Ferghanah Valley

particularly the problematic value of legitimacy—and further commentary about the ambiguous significance of kinship relations in Turco-Mongol politics. His Mongol uncle was, he reported, "like a father and elder brother,"[43] or as he describes him during his later visit in 1502, his *tuqqan*. By visiting him Bābur sought to conciliate his father's old rival—and near relation—and by so doing, give a public impression of rising fortunes. As he frankly remarks "if I would attend him old resentments might be removed, which would be well-regarded both far and near."[44] The Khan graciously received Bābur, formally honored him and treated him kindly before sending his nephew on his way.

Bābur gives the impression the meeting was a success, but his subsequent narrative indicates the opposite. A short time later Mahmūd Khan occupied the city of Ura Tipa at the western end of the Ferghanah valley, the very town Bābur's forces tried unsuccessfully to recapture after he returned to Andijan from his uncle's camp. A year earlier Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā had seized Ura-Tipa along with Khujand and Marghinan as he moved on Bābur in Andijan. By 1495 the town had been inherited by Ahmad Mīrzā's successor in Samarqand, Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā, who in turn had granted it to his son, and Bābur's cousin, Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā. Mahmūd Khan could certainly have offered the town to Bābur, his sister's son, but instead and not surprisingly he chose to increase his own power, and granted it to his governor of the Tashkent region, Muhammad Husayn Dughlat, who held it until 1503.[45] Mahmūd Khān's choice was probably an easy one. The Dughlats were a powerful Mongol lineage, long allied with the Chaghatay Khans; Bābur was a relatively insignificant nephew, one among many competing Tīmūrids. In subsequent meetings Mahmūd Khan always treated Bābur with the same hospitality and formal respect, while usually ignoring his young nephew's pleas for military support.

Fratricidal warfare between Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā's sons now offered Bābur an opportunity not only to retake Ura Tipa and other towns previously held by his father, but to seize Samarqand itself. In June or early July, 1496 Bābur and his *beg*s learned that Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā's heir to Samarqand, Baysunghur Mīrzā,

[43] BN-M, f. 31b.
[44] Ibid., f. 31b.
[45] BN-M, f. 32b.

then eighteen years old, had been defeated by his brother, Sultān ʿAli Mīrzā, so recently expelled by Mahmūd Khan from Ura Tipa, in a battle near Bukhara. Just before this Baysunghur Mīrzā had ordered his brother to be blinded in Samarqand, but the latter had escaped to Bukhara with the help of Khwājah Yahyā, one of the sons of the influential sūfī and patron saint of the late fifteenth century Tīmūrids, the recently deceased Naqshbandī *shaykh*, Khwājah Ubaydullāh Ahrār (d. 1490).[46] Bābur later spoke admiringly of his deceased cousin, Baysunghur Mīrzā, as the model Tīmūrid prince—"just, humane, good natured and learned,"[47] but it is easy to praise dead rivals, and in 1496 news of this deadly sibling rivalry prompted Bābur to mount up "to realize our desire for Samarqand."[48] As Bābur with typically engaging frankness describes his political ambitions just before he occupied Tīmūr's capital a second time in 1500, "Given a capital like Samarqand, why would a person wish to waste time in a place like Andijan."[49] In the years following his first assault on the city Bābur twice gained and twice lost both Samarqand and Andijan before fleeing to Kabul in 1504. Once in Kabul he found himself in an analogous situation to that in Mawarannahr, and he later makes a similar observation about eastern Afghanistan's imperial potential, noting, in effect, that no one would squander energy suppressing fractious Pashtun tribes around Kabul given more promising opportunities elsewhere.

During these eight years from 1496 to 1504 Bābur and his cousins each constituted a constellation of small factions composed of immediate family members and hereditary family loyalists, the norm of Tīmūrid politics since Tīmūr's death in 1405.[50] The core of these factions numbered as few as two to three hundred men, as was shown during the *fatrat* or *qazaqlïq* periods in which first Baysunghur Mīrzā and later Bābur suffered catastrophic defeats. These factions grew or diminished in direct and immediate proportion to the military success or defeats of the moment. Some of those who joined or deserted on these occasions were pastoral nomads, occasionally Uzbek Turks but more often Mongols who were asso-

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[46] See below Chapter 3 for a discussion of Ahrār and the Naqshbandī order.
[47] BN-M, f. 68b.
[48] BN-M, f. 37b.
[49] BN-M, f. 78a.
[50] Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, Chapters 7-8.

ciated with Bābur's numerous Mongol kin. Neither Bābur nor his cousins though, were leaders of nomadic confederations like those of Chingīz Khan and Tīmūr, although there were important Mongol clans serving or allied with the Chaghatay khans, many of whose families were still pastoral nomads.[51] Some of these Mongols joined with and then abandoned Bābur with such regularity that in his memoirs he equated virtually all Mongol troops with treachery.

In 1494 Bābur inherited most of his advisors, tutors and commanders from his father, and some of these men who survived later battles followed him all the way to India. Most of these men were Turks or Mongols, some members of important clans or hereditary military units dating to Chingīz Khān's time, aristocrats in the sense they belonged to historically important lineages. The Dughlat amirs were one of the most important such clans. The principal exception in Bābur's case was Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī, his religious tutor and advisor, a descendant of a historically influential religious lineage in Ferghanah.[52] Typical of his Turco-Mongol supporters in 1494 were Shaykh Mazid Beg Qauchin, Bābur's first *beg atekeh* and Qāsim Beg Qauchin the second "Lord of Bābur's Gate," his principal military advisor and chief administrator.[53] Both men had served with 'Umar Shaykh Mīrzā as *beg*s, the superior rank of men who held critical military commands and were often assigned to govern provinces.[54] Both were *qauchins,* members of an hereditary military class formed before Tīmūr's time.[55] These two men were also typical in another sense; their later decisions illustrate the unpredictable loyalty of even Bābur's closest advisors, at least based upon our limited knowledge of their motives. Shaykh Mazid Beg Qauchin, whom 'Umar Shaykh trusted to be Bābur's tutor, deserted him in 1498 after he

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[51] TR-T, fs. 143a-144. Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat lists a number of well-known Mongol clans, such as the Barlas, the Kunji and the Begchik, whose leaders he refers to as *amīr*s, not *beg*s. In contrast Tīmūr and his sons and commanders led genuinely nomadic armies whose troops were accompanied by their families and herds. For a first-hand description of Chaghatay Mongol camps in northeastern Iran and how these were mobilized for campaigns see Clavijo's eyewitness account, Ross and Power ed., *Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane*, 190-91.

[52] BN-M, f. 16.

[53] See BN-A, 606-08 and BN-B, p. 24 n. 2.

[54] BN-A, 590-92.

[55] For references to this social group whose special status dated to Chingīzid times see Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan,* 81-82 and Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane,* 186, n. 31.

abandoned Samarqand and then lost Andijan for the first time. Qāsim Beg Qauchin, in contrast, remained loyal to Bābur throughout these years, and served him as late as 1522 in Kabul as *beg atekeh* to Humāyūn, Bābur's eldest son and heir.

The fragile ties between young Tīmūrid *mīrzās* like Bābur and their closest supporters indicate that none of these small factions constituted a tightly controlled, highly disciplined inner circle or *kesig* on the Chingīzid model.[56] On the evidence of his own narrative Bābur's campaigns possessed little coercive power over his senior commanders. Even after his victories in India in 1526 and 1527 some of his longest-serving *begs* left him because they hated the Indian climate! One of these men, Khwājah Kalān, was a *musāhib*, a "companion," a long-time adherent and close confidant, one of his inner circle of advisors.[57] Men like Shaykh Mazīd Beg and Qāsim Beg may not have been secure hereditary nobility in the late feudal and early modern European sense, but they often flouted the wishes or orders of their nominal Tīmūrid leaders, or simply betrayed them. Many had acquired lands through military assignments, which Bābur identifies as *tiyūl*, the grants generally thought to have been taxable and conveying less autonomy than the *soyurghal*.[58] Qāsim Beg Qauchin, whom Bābur describes as "one of the old army *beg*s of Andijan," probably owned estates and/or grazing animals in Ferghanah. However, Bābur never discusses the legal or political significance of these assignments which, on the evidence of his text, were at this time de facto permanent holdings. It is impossible to say whether such men felt politically secure in the late-Tīmūrid world of shifting military fortunes. Yet the quixotic loyalties of one of Bābur's *beg*s, Qambar ʿAli Mughul, indicates that some of these men felt confident enough to serve at their own pleasure.

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[56] For the definition and bibliography of the term *kesig* see Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge, Ma.: Council on East Asian Studies, 1978), 148 n. 10. A discussion of the *kesig* which emphasizes its patrimonial character rather than its discipline is offered by Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 99-100.

[57] Bābur refers to Khwājah Kalān as a "companion" in two successive folios concerning events of January 1520. BN-M, fs. 250a-b. The implication of each passage is that Bābur recalled him from other duties so that he would resume his place as a member of Bābur's immediate entourage.

[58] For the variant means of *tiyūl* see Ann K. S. Lambton "Tiyūl," in EI2, 10, Fascs. 171-72, pp. 550-5l.

A man with no distinguished Turco-Mongol lineage, one whose father had been a skinner, Qambar ʿAlī had served Bābur's maternal grandfather Yūnas Khan, as an *aftabchï* or flask-bearer. Sometime later he was promoted to be a *beg*.[59] Bābur says that Qambar ʿAlī was actually wealthier than all his other *beg*s, possessing both more land and more retainers than they: *qalin vilāyatlïq ve khūb naukarlïq*.[60] Some of these lands were evidently held as *tiyūl*, as Bābur indicates Qambar ʿAlī held the important town of Khujand, west of Andijan in 1494, and was later given two other nearby towns.[61] It is impossible to know how Qambar ʿAlī became so influential or so wealthy, but Bābur gives the impression he was a canny, self-serving man who carefully protected his own interests. Qambar ʿAlī repeatedly left Bābur in the midst of campaigns to return to his own holdings, then rejoining his service after the danger had passed. He first retired to his lands in 1498 when Bābur lost Andijan as well as Samarqand,[62] and after rejoining Bābur in the late fall or early winter of 1499 when he had retaken Andijan, Qambar ʿAlī asked permission to return to Khujand, and Bābur says he had little choice but to let him go.[63] Next year during the winter of 1499-1500 having once again rejoined Bābur's camp, Qambar ʿAlī petulantly, in Bābur's characterization, left camp again for Khujand, and returned only when Bābur dispatched several *beg*s to ask him to return.[64] Bābur's evident frustration with Qambar ʿAlī indicates how insecure he was in Ferghanah in the 1490's. He could not even rely upon this commoner whom he, his father and grandfather had promoted and rewarded. Apart from a very few genuine family loyalists such as Qāsim Beg Qauchin, Bābur governed and campaigned as a negotiator whose status as a Tīmūrid conveyed legitimacy, but very little unrestricted power.

As Bābur makes clear Qambar ʿAlī and other *beg*s each commanded large personal detachments, men whom they took with them when they left Bābur's camp. *Beg*s thus led factions of their

[59] BN-B, f. 15b.
[60] BN-M, f. 71b.
[61] Ibid., f. 71b.
[62] BN-M, f 65b.
[63] BN-M, f. 71b.
[64] BN-M, fs. 73a-b.

own as they circled for advantage around Mawarannahr's Tīmūrid *mīrzās* and Chingīzid *khans*. Most *beg*s were virtually free agents who often left one Tīmūrid for another or for a Chingīzid. However, shifting allegiances should not be seen through the normative ideology of modern nation states. Pragmatic loyalties had long been the norm in Central Asia. Bābur rarely expresses indignation when he describes how one of his own men changed leaders, unless it is one of his own kin.[65] A man who personified this tradition was Bābā Qulī, Bābur's second "lord of the gate," and as a result, one might think, a loyal supporter, but a man who abandoned him when Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā marched on Andijan in 1494. It was Bābā Qulī who at that time gave 'Umar Shaykh Mīrzā's fortress of Ura Tipa to Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā.[66]

Ranked below such men were *ichki beg*s, a group of men with significantly less independent power, influence and wealth who were usually much more dependent on their patrons, whether Tīmūrids, Chaghatays or non-Chingīzid Turco-Mongol *beg*s. In Bābur's opinion the power to promote *ichki beg*s or others to *beg* rank was an attribute of independent power or sovereignty, the status of a pādshāh.[67] Finally, each *beg* or *ichki beg* commanded varying numbers of *yigitler*, literally youths or warriors, but actually just individual horsemen of any age or lesser means, without their own following or independent means or prestigious lineage.[68] Bābur often refers to men of all these ranks simply as *naukar*, liegemen or members of his military retinue.[69]

Bābur leaves no doubt that in his own mind none of these *beg*s or any other non-Tīmūrid or non-Chingīzid Turco-Mongol could legitimately aspire to rule, yet in his years in Mawarannahr he had constantly to fear challenges to his youthful authority and Tīmūrid legitimacy. In his narrative of this early period and subsequently when he describes his first insecure years in Kabul, he criticizes

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[65] In pre-Chingīzid Mongol times *nökhöd* or "freemen" followed "any leader who could provide for them." Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan,* 13.

[66] BN-M, f. 14b.

[67] BN-M, f. 69a.

[68] Haydar Mirza refers to these individual warriors as *bahādurs*. TR-T, f. 143a.

[69] Bābur's usage of these terms varies. For a detailed discussion see the entry "Bey" in BN-A, 590-92. In Mongol times these *naukar* were known as *nökhöd*, a term which signified a status like the Tīmūrid-era *yigitler*. In modern Iran the term is usually used simply to mean servant.

men, who though they lacked "birth and lineage," still had sovereign pretensions. Bābur uses this phrase to ridicule the obvious political ambitions of the Qipchaq Turk, Khusrau Shāh, a sometime ally/retainer of Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā. By the late 1490's Khusrau Shāh controlled Badakhshan and the upper Oxus region and further expanded his influence as the Tīmūrids self-destructed. By 1500 he had all but proclaimed his own sovereignty in these territories. In characterizing Khusrau Shāh as a "worthless man" who lacked "nobility, culture, bravery and a sense of justice,"[70] Bābur was mainly reacting to Khusrau Shāh's murder of Baysunghur Mīrzā, whom Bābur himself forced from Samarqand in 1497. He does not allude to Khusrau Shāh's self-interested manipulation of the copper coinage of Hisar, which the Soviet numismatist, Elena Davidovich, cites as evidence to corroborate Bābur's scathing denunciation of the man.[71] Haydar Mīrzā, probably relying on his cousin's autobiography, himself criticizes Khusrau Shāh for his "sovereign presumptions."[72] Bābur later also criticizes Khusrau's brother, Bāqī Chaghāniānī, for having the *naqārah,* the kettledrum, beaten at his gate.[73] These drums were usually beaten before fortresses and palaces, as Persian and Mughul miniature paintings attest, and therefore were regarded as sovereign symbols. Bābur reports indignantly that Bāqī Chaghāniānī had the *naqārah* beaten, "even though he acknowledged Bābur as *pādshāh.*"[74]

Bābur speaks with similar resentment about the arrogance of two Mongols related to his mother's family, ʿAlī Dūst Taghaʾī and his son, Muhammad, who, he says, began acting arrogantly in 1499, with the son holding court in Andijan itself "in the fashion of a sultān."[75] At this time, Bābur bitterly remembers, he was powerless to challenge these men, and had to suffer humiliation in silence. Bābur reacts similarly when he recalls the presumption of Muqīm and Shāh Shujāʿ Arghun, Mongol adherents of the Harat Tīmūrids. Shortly after Harat fell to Shībānī Khan in 1507 they had the

[70] BN-M, f. 68a.

[71] E. Davidovich and A. Mukhtarov, *Stranitsy Istorii Gissara* ("Irfon," Dushambe, 1969), 29. For a discussion of this coinage see also Davidovich, *Istoriya Denezhnogo Obrashcheniya Srednevekovoī Sredneī Azii*, 202-23.

[72] TR-T., f. 66a.

[73] BN-M, f. 159a.

[74] Ibid., f. 159a.

[75] BN-M, f. 75a.

temerity to implicitly claim status equal to Bābur by sealing a letter to him in the middle of a page, where only equals or superiors placed their seal. Bābur felt this an act of rudeness was itself symptomatic of the social and political decay which led to the fall of Tīmūrid Harat.[76] In his mind the disappearance of such well-established political etiquette reflected the deteriorating authority of Tīmūrids in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The Golden Road to Samarqand

When therefore in the early summer of 1496 fourteen year-old Bābur and his *beg*s decided to march on Samarqand, their original force of perhaps 600 men did not represent a tightly disciplined army, but one which, as events were to show, could dissolve virtually overnight. His first assault on the city was carried out in alliance with two of Baysunghur Mīrzā's brothers, sons of Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā: Sultān ʿAli Mīrzā from Bukhara and Sultān Masʿūd Mīrzā from Hisar, a city which had been part of his father's appanage before he inherited Samarqand. After a desultory siege of three months, Bābur and ʿAli Mīrzā, the very cousin whom Bābur had earlier tried to displace from Ura Tipa, decided to suspend operations for the winter. Masʿūd Mīrzā, who had, Bābur writes, actually come to Samarqand because he fancied a young girl there, married her and took the girl home to Hisar, "abandoning his imperial (*mulkgīrliq*) ambitions."[77] In Bābur's account his cousin's infatuation seems inexplicable and almost comic, but to later readers of the events of these years Masʿūd Mīrzā at least illustrates that young Tīmūrids possessed emotions apart from dynastic ambition. It was a revelation Bābur himself offers a few pages later. Still, given the instability of the period Tīmūrids could not long survive such romantic self-indulgence, and not long afterwards Masʿūd Mīrzā was blinded by his nominal subordinate, the less sentimental and far more ruthless Khusrau Shāh.

Resuming operations with Sultān ʿAli Mīrzā the following May, Bābur inadvertently acquired 3-400 of Baysunghur Mīrzā's men near Samarqand. They had been cut off from the city and in the

[76] BN-M, f. 208a.
[77] BN-M, fs. 38a-b.

circumstances opted to join Bābur, a good illustration of the pragmatic loyalties of many Turco-Mongols who probably found it difficult to foresee the fortunes of the many marauding Tīmūrid teenagers.[78] When Shībānī Khan, now poised on Mawarannahr's western fringes to exploit the Tīmūrid civil wars, failed to aid Baysunghur Mīrzā, Bābur's and Sultān ʿAli Mīrzā's combined forces took the city in November, 1497. Baysunghur Mīrzā fled with fewer than 300 remaining supporters to Khusrau Shāh in Qunduz in northeastern Afghānistān, who subsequently had him executed.

At the time Bābur probably saw his capture of Samarqand as a remarkable triumph and perhaps even as a Tīmūrid renaissance. In retrospect and based on the evidence of his own memoirs, his victory represented the apogee of his early career in Mawarannahr, after which his fortunes sharply deteriorated, leading eventually to his expulsion from his homeland. He himself reports that when he and his cousin took Samarqand after a seven month siege, the inhabitants of the city and its surrounding districts were impoverished, lacking food, money and seed for new crops. As soon as the two men occupied the city Bābur's men began to desert, "one by one and two by two," including all his Mongol troops, the first of many times Bābur felt betrayed by Mongols. He had good reason, for one of the Mongols who left was Sultān Ahmad Tambal who, together with Mongol allies, seized Bābur's younger brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā and with the young man in tow, they now besieged Bābur's home, Andijan. This non-Chingīzid Mongol, previously a *beg* of Bābur's father but also a man closely connected with Mahmūd Khan, thus exploited the tensions of appanage politics and during the next several years tried to use Jahāngīr Mīrzā to further his own ambitions in the Ferghanah valley. Eventually he was to betray not only Bābur but also Mahmūd Khan, and was finally killed by the Uzbeks.

Desperate pleas for help from Bābur's mother and grandmother in Andijan prompted Bābur to abandon Samarqand in March 1498, where he had ruled "as *pādshāh*" for one hundred days. Leaving the city to his nominal ally, ʿAlī Mīrzā, he marched back towards Ferghanah. However, shortly after leaving Samarqand he learned that the Andijan fortress had already fallen to Ahmad Tambal, who shortly thereafter murdered Bābur's religious tutor, Khwājah

[78] BN-M, fs. 39a-b.

Maulānā Qāzī. The Khwājah was probably executed because he was far more significant than just an *ʿalīm* and spiritual mentor to Bābur. He was, rather, one of Bābur's most loyal and active partisans, a powerful and wealthy man who helped organized Andijān's defense and supplied an estimated 8,000 sheep to the garrison during the siege. Ahmad Tambal's murder of the Qāzī was the second of many subsequent reasons why Bābur later speaks of this man with such revulsion.

Then just after Bābur describes how he and his small band of loyalists took refuge for the winter in Khujand, which he characterizes as a "miserable place,"[79] he pauses to recall his emotions in one of the many passages that distinguishes his work from the one-dimensional military-political narratives of earlier rulers, or those of most court historians. Here for the first time in the text he displays his own emotional vulnerability, that is his humanity, and in so doing also emphasizes his life's struggles. "Since I had known myself," he poignantly writes, "I had not known such grief and affliction."[80] After recounting how seven to eight hundred of his men whose families had been in Andijan now deserted him, Bābur remarks that suffering such "great difficulties, I involuntarily wept!"[81] Accounts of weeping Tīmūrids would startle any reader of traditional court histories, but even more important than that admission of normal human emotion is Bābur's remark *Ta özümni bilip idim*, "since I had known myself...." By saying this, more particularly by using the reflexive Turkī pronoun "özüm," Bābur offers an appreciation of the sense of maturity he recalls feeling by this time of his life, a memory that in his fifteenth year he possessed a conscious apprehension of himself as a distinct person. In modern Turkish a similar phrase carries the connotation of coming of age, of the maturation that accompanies puberty.

Bābur's sense of adulthood or personhood, or the way he felt or conceived of it, was also shared by at least two of his contemporaries. His way of describing how, by 1500, he had fully matured into an autonomous individual, echoes the sentiment of a similar remark of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, the famous late fifteenth-century Turkī poet and Husayn Bayqara's principal minister in Harat.

[79] BN-M, f. 60a.
[80] BN-M, fs. 54a-b.
[81] BN-M, f. 55b.

Writing in his treatise on the comparative literary virtues of Persian and Turkī, the *Muhākamat al-Lughatain*, Navāʾī says of his intellectual development, but using the predominantly Arabic and Persian vocabulary of an urbane intellectual, "Then I reached the age of comprehension."[82] *Shuʿūr*, the Arabic word that Navāʾī employs has a variety of associated meanings that connote self-consciousness including sensibility, consciousness and perception. Bābur's and Navāʾī's remembered sense of themselves closely resembles, in turn, the recollection of Haydar Mīrzā, who in the course of describing his service with a Mongol uncle twice alludes to the emotional and intellectual divide between childhood and maturity. First, when describing how his uncle kept him out of a battle in 1512, when he was just twelve years of age, he remarks that his uncle would not allow him to fight because he had not yet reached the age where he could tell right from wrong or stay out of trouble.[83] Then shortly afterwards writing in his typically florid Persian, Haydar Mīrzā remarks of his childhood state three years later in 1515, saying:

> The eagle of my intelligence had not yet fully thrown off the fetters in the nest of the brain. The period of my life had not matured from the dawning glow of childhood to the attentive sunlight of youth.[84]

He continues in the same elliptical style, obscuring the individuality that Bābur's simpler prose evokes, to remark he was then just fifteen years of age. Bābur's great-grandson, Jahāngīr (r.1605-36) makes a similar distinction between youth and responsible maturity when he writes in his memoirs for the year 1618 "since I arrived at the age of discretion...."[85] Unfortunately he does not specify the year he attained maturity.

This affecting emotional interlude anticipates many other such displays in the narrative and poetry of his later life, but at this point in the text Bābur recalls that in the spring of 1498 he quickly recovered his optimism. Shortly after his mother and grandmother arrived in Khujand from Andijan—the safe passage of women being one of the courtesies of Turco-Mongol warfare—Bābur re-

[82] Navāʾī, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain*, 26. His exact wording is:

چون شعور سنی غه قدم قویولدی...

[83] TR-T, f. 143b.

[84] Ibid., f. 143b.

[85] TJ, II, 12.

newed his efforts to restore his fortunes. Writing again in the ingenuous tone that gives his memoirs their unique quality, Bābur rhetorically asks how could a person, that is a Tīmūrid, do anything else, when he is "ambitious to rule and desirous of conquest."[86] Bābur once again petitioned his Mongol uncle, Sultān Mahmūd Khan, to help him. In fact earlier in the year his uncle had responded to Bābur's pleas from Khujand to march on Andijan, but rather than attack the fortress he negotiated with Ahmad Tambal, not surprising considering Tambal's close personal relationship with the Chaghatay Khan.[87] In fact Ahmad Tambal's elder brother, Beg Tilbah, was the Khān's *eshik agasï*, the "Lord of the his Gate," that is his principal advisor/minister.[88]

Remembering his uncle's caution, Bābur overlooks this relationship and attributes it to the fact that Mahmūd Khan was a poor soldier even if a decent man.[89] This time, however, his uncle lent him four or five thousand troops to reoccupy Samarqand, but when they retreated in the face of nearby Uzbek raids Bābur went to Tashkent himself and was assigned six or seven hundred different troops. He says he wanted these men to make another attempt to recover Samarqand, but by winter he and his men had failed and retired for the winter to the small settlement of Pashagar, a village formerly owned by Khwājah Ahrār, the deceased Naqshbandī sūfī *shaykh* whom Bābur, like most of his Tīmūrid uncles and cousins, revered. They probably chose the village just because of this important connection. Spring found them wandering aimlessly in the pasture lands south of Ura Tipa, "bewildered," as Bābur says, "not knowing where to go, not knowing what to do."[90]

The Qazaq Years

1498-1499 was the initial *fatrat* or interregnum in Bābur's early career, the first time he became a *qazaq*, a political vagabond, a throneless, wandering Tīmūrid, like his cousin Baysunghur Mīrzā, whom Bābur had so recently expelled from Samarqand. Bābur

[86] BN-M, f. 55b.
[87] BN-M, f. 71b.
[88] BN-M, f. 55a. For this office see BN-A, 606-607.
[89] BN-M, f. 54b.
[90] BN-M, f. 60a.

repeatedly uses the term *qazaqlïqlar*—throneless, vagabond times—to characterize his and other Tīmūrids' days of wandering in the political wilderness, fighting for fortresses and kingdoms, or like Bābur, trying to recover those they had lost. He twice mentions Sultān Husayn Bayqara's *qazaqlïqlar*, the days before he seized Harat, his birthplace, in 1469.[91] In these situations only considerable luck and military success generated the power and prestige that the charisma of Tīmūrid or Chingīzid lineage could not guarantee. If frequently and continuously repeated victories generated a dynamic charisma, composed of horses for mounts, sheep and goats for food, armaments and armor, sometimes coin, usually additional troops and the aura of invincibility or at least good fortune. Such hard-won wealth and prestige sometimes allowed displaced rulers or political vagabonds of good lineage to move from *qazaqlïq* status of ambitious brigandage to *istiqlāl*, or sovereignty, or from *fatrat* to *fursat*.[92]

This process of generating active charisma was still observable in the early twentieth century in northwestern Iran, not far from the region where Husayn Bayqara spent his own *qazaqlïq* days. A hypothetical example was evocatively described for a pastoral nomadic setting in the early twentieth century by a member of the Turkic Shāh Sevān federation living within the Iranian border, northeast of Tabriz in the Mughan steppe, near the Caspian Sea. Speaking in the 1960's and alluding to the turmoil of post-World War I Iran this man said to his educated questioner:

> As you now acquire rank with your pen, just so in those times, [before 1923] whoever was smart would acquire rank. For example, one day I might raid a camp, or leave five men dead.
> They would then call me äshrar, and fifty horsemen, say, would follow me.... The smart man who took his gun and brought in most by his nightly raids—they would call him smart, they would call him chief, he was reckoned important....That was how the great tribes became powerful *äshrars*.[93]

[91] BN-M., fs. 164a-165a. See also BN-B, p. 258, n. 3. The author of the history of Shībānī Khan, Kamal al-Dīn ʿAlī Bināʾī (1453-1512) uses the phrase *zamān-i qazaqī* "qazaq times" to characterize Shibānī's early period of struggle. For the Persian text see Kazuyuki Kubo's edited text "*Shaybānī-nāma*" in Mano and Kubo, *A Synthetical Study on Central Asian Culture in the Turco-Islamic Period*, 5.

[92] Or as Said Amir Arjomand summarizes Max Weber's theory, "...quintessentially, power engenders charisma and ...the continuous exercise of power is self-legitimatory." *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 6.

[93] Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran*, 244.

This Shāh Sevān tribesman used *ashrār*, an Arabic term meaning "sinful or seditious" as a latter day equivalent of the Turkī *qazaq*, the word Bābur employs for freebooter or political exile; he employed *ashrārlīq* exactly as Bābur uses *qazaqlīq*.[94] Bābur was not a pastoral nomad, not a tribal leader; nor were most of his Tīmūrid and Chingīzid rivals in the late fifteenth century. Nonetheless, his unstructured, atomized political environment called for the same skills and offered similar rewards as did raiding for politically ambitious Shāh Sevān tribesmen.

Similar stories about Tīmūr's rise to power were told in 1405 to the Castilian ambassador to Samarqand, Ruy González de Clavijo. While sometimes thought to have been apocryphal, knowledge of twentieth century pastoral nomadic societies such as the Shāh Sevān make these stories seem eminently plausible. Clavijo wrote:

> According to the stories told us, Tīmūr in his youth was wont to ride out with his four or five companions on foray, and one day they would lift a sheep and on another occasion a cow, taking these by stealth from the flocks of their neighbours. Then when home again Tīmūr would make a feast of his booty, inviting his companions, and others would join for he was a man of heart and very hospitable, dividing what he had with friends. Others now came to join his following until at length he had some three hundred horsemen under his command, and with these he would ride forth through the countryside plundering and robbing all who came his way; but next dividing all he took among those who rode with him.[95]

Clavijo's report perfectly encapsulates nomadic raiding as well as the customary and expected largess of raiders. Bābur's own minutely documented generosity when he takes Delhi and Agra in 1526 may be at least partly attributed to this tradition. Only missing from Clavijo's report and from that of the Shāh Sevān tribesman is an account of the ease and frequency with which men might pragmatically shift their loyalty from one leader to another. All of these characteristics were earlier evident in Mongolia and in the person and career of Chingīz Khan.[96]

In 1498 Bābur was fortunate not to have to begin his career from

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[94] See Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran*, glossary, xvi and index, 412.

[95] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 210-11.

[96] Ratchnevsky describes this tradition of largess given to solidify tribal followers, *Genghis Khan,* see especially pp. 23 & 148.

such a lowly position as the hypothetical Shāh Sevān tribesman, or even the relative early obscurity of Tīmūr or Chingīz Khan. He was a recognized Tīmūrid. By his own count—or according to his recollection—he still had 240 men with him in the summer of 1499 and at least some of them, he writes, called him *pādshāh*.[97] Whether or not these men really called him anything more than *mīrzā* at this time, with their aid he began the process of recovering Ferghanah, first occupying Marginan, just west of Andijan, in the early summer of 1499. Then, following a popular rebellion against the Ahmad Tambal and his Mongols in Akhsi and Andijan, Bābur reentered his old fortress in June or July. Within days he also reoccupied his father's capital at Akhsi about forty-five miles to the north-northwest, and began reasserting control over nearby towns and villages, as his Mongol opponents dissolved into small groups of refugees or fled with Ahmad Tambal.

Apart from his own men a number of Mongols remained behind. These men were the same Mongols who had helped to hold Andijan against Bābur a year earlier and who had stripped his supporters and those of Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī of their possessions. Bābur identifies them as adherents of his mother, a daughter of Yūnas Khan, and other Mongols who in 1495 had been serving members of the Dughlat clan in Hisar, when Husayn Bayqara attacked the city.[98] They then fled north to Andijan, where they formally pledged their allegiance to Bābur. He says they were *Mughul ululsï din*, from the Mongol *ulus*, the Mongol tribe, community or "nation," who were known for their *yamanlïq ve bozuqchalïq*, their "viciousness and destructiveness," and then notes bitterly that they rebelled against him four or five times during his life.[99] He also remarks that they had repeatedly acted similarly with their own *khan*s, a comment borne out in page after page of Haydar Mīrzā's history. Given their previous treachery Bābur's men now suggested to him these Mongols be stripped of their stolen clothes, horses and sheep, and he agreed to confiscate those things the Mongols had taken during the recent *qazaqlïq* times. However, this simple act of just retribution prompted these same Mongols to leave Andijan and once again join Sultān Ahmad Tambal, prompting Bābur writing

[97] BN-M, fs. 61 & 65a.
[98] BN-M, fs. 32b & 65a.
[99] Ibid., f. 64b.

many years later, to reflect on and cite this episode as a lesson in statesmanship.

It is just how Bābur analyzes this incident that makes his memoir seem not merely an intriguing personal narrative but also an idiosyncratic kind of "mirror for princes" guide for future sovereigns. The conclusion he draws while years later reflecting on the wisdom of this decision is an example of how Bābur offers maxims or political truisms not as abstracted generalizations typical of the "advice" genre, but commentaries on specific incidents. He obviously had drawn an important lesson from this encounter with these Mongols that he wanted to pass on, probably to his eldest son Humāyūn. Thus while he writes "Indeed, it seemed just," his men should reclaim their property, he concludes that politics not justice should have been his guide.

> In the matter of seizing and holding kingdoms, although some acts may appear to be just and reasonable it is necessary and expedient to consider the 100,000 implications of every one. In consequence of our giving this one particular imprudent command there arose such tumult and rebellions. Eventually this single ill-considered order meant we had to leave Andijan a second time.[100]

After further reflecting on the inherent treachery of Mongols that resulted, he says, from their *mughullīq natījeh*, their "innate Mongol nature," Bābur resumes his narrative of his skirmishes and battles with the Mongol Sultān Ahmad Tambal, who held Bābur's brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā, in his camp. Now in control of Andijan and Akhsi Bābur and his men, who then probably numbered no more than 3-400, set off in August 1499 to retake the eastern Ferghanah fortresses of Ush and Uzgend, just southeast and east of Andijan respectively. Bābur's narrative of the next year's events leading up to his second occupation of Samarqand conveys a sense of the confusion of this period with an immediacy borne of his typically detailed description of warfare and political intrigue.

Attacking the small fortress of Madu (Mazu) just southeast of Ush, commanded by Ahmad Tambal's brother with 250 men, Bābur's equally small force initially lost many men killed by rocks thrown by the defenders on the walls high above a riverbed. However, after Bābur seized control of the river and the water supply

[100] BN-M, f. 64b.

the Mongols surrendered and were taken off to Andijan in chains. Meanwhile Tambal himself moved his troops away from threatening Andijan to confront Bābur near Ush, where the two "armies" faced each other for over a month, indulging in occasional skirmishes but little serious warfare. Finally, in the late fall of 1499 they clashed in a pitched battle involving both armored cavalry and foot soldiers with shields. In this Bābur's first real battle, he was victorious, sending Tambal fleeing the field and capturing many enemy troops, who were immediately beheaded.

Despite this minor victory Bābur and his men had to retire to Andijan because their meagre supplies were exhausted. Then they decided to spend the winter in the nearby hills, where the forests held abundant game. There they set fires to flush out goats and deer, and made typically Turco-Mongol hunting circles to encircle pheasants that they killed with falcons and darts.[101] Meanwhile his *beg*s raided Tambal's forces, bringing in heads of the unlucky men they caught, and drove off their enemy's herds to deprive them of food. Bābur describes these attacks as *qazaq*s, or raids, not full scale attacks or campaigns; he doesn't even use the word *chapqun*, the term he later uses to describe raids he makes for sheep, goats or general booty in Afghanistan. However, just at the point, as "the enemy was being worn down and weakened,"[102] Qambar ʿAlī Mughul, Bābur's wealthiest but most capricious *beg*, asked permission to go home and influenced others to do the same. With his force partly dispersed Bābur retired to Andijan. Simultaneously Sultān Ahmad Tambal sent emissaries to Sultān Mahmūd Khan in Tashkent, where Tambal's relative was not only the "Lord of the Khan's gate," but also the tutor or *beg atekeh* to the Khan's favorite son.

The former, Beg Tilbah, Tambal's elder brother and long in service with Mongol khans in the Altï Shahr country east of Ferghanah, was allowed to join Tambal along with an estimated 5-6,000 troops under the Khan's favorite son. As they marched east into the valley they decided to besiege Kasan, immediately north of

[101] The Arab historian Ahmad Ibn Arabshāh gives a dramatically worded picture of Tīmūr's Turco-Mongol hunting customs designed also to train warriors for battle. See Ahmed Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Tīmūr the Great Amir* J. H. Sanders trans. (Lahore: Progressive Books, repr. 1976), 308-9.

[102] BN-M, f. 71b.

Akhsi, Bābur with the few horsemen still attending him then rode overnight from Andijan to Akhsi; many of his men arrived in his father's old capital suffering from frostbite in the bitterly cold winter weather. Despite their small numbers and condition, the news of their unexpected arrival apparently frightened off the large Tashkent force, for they inexplicably retreated before Tambal arrived from Uzgend. When Tambal reached the area his forces and Bābur's engaged in some inconsequential skirmishes before settling down for a long standoff at the Pishkaran fortress east of Kasan.

During the winter months of 1500 Bābur maneuvered to survive in a political environment marked not only by the hostility of Ahmad Tambal, who still held Bābur's brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā, but by the uncertain loyalties of local notables and his own men. While his men and Tambal's carried out raids against each other's camp he struggled to hold his forces together and maintain his authority. Qambar ʿAlī, according to Bābur, continued to act like a primadonna and threatened to return to his estates—he had left Bābur and then returned at least twice in the previous two years. This time he actually began riding off when some of Bābur's *beg*s appealed to him to stay.[103] He was to repeat this behavior several more times in the following years, disappearing and rejoining Bābur at his own choice. Recalling his behavior many years later in India, Bābur bitterly characterized him as a "fickle, unreliable manikin,"[104] using the contemptuous Persian pejorative term for man, *mardak,* to convey his distaste for Qambar ʿAlī's cynical, selfish behavior.[105]

Bābur consistently employs the contemptuous term *mardak* throughout his memoir, usually prefaced by a series of derogatory adjectives, to denounce men who had betrayed, simply opposed him or, in his view, had acted ignobly. In most cases he reserves this epithet for men with no Tīmūrid or Chingīzid blood; often he intends it to be a humiliating reference to someone's common status. Another man whom he characterizes as a *mardak* was a hill chief near Andijan who just at this time in the winter of 1500 was threatening to defect to Sultān Ahmad Tambal. Bābur seems to

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[103] BN-M, f, 73b.
[104] BN-M, f. 71b.
[105] In Persian the "k" suffixed to any word indicates contempt. Here it is suffixed to *mard* or man.

have feared this man, Sayyid Yūsuf Mejemī, would take the many tribesmen he controlled to Tambal's side. According to Bābur, Sayyid Yūsuf had already changed sides two or three times between himself and Sultān Tambal in the past year and a half and had begun to make new overtures to Tambal. He complains that Sayyid Yūsuf while greater than a chief, had unjustifiably begun acting like a *beg*, although no one had ever made him one.[106] After cutting off his route to Ahmad Tambal Bābur brought Sayyid Yūsuf into his own entourage, where he appears to have remained.

Bābur uses *mardak* for the third time within the same folio to rail against the truce with Sultān Ahmad Tambal that was forced on him by Qambar ʿAlī and ʿAlī Dust Taghaʾī in February 1500. He says he had not known of and would not have approved such an agreement, but that because these two *mardak*s, these two manikins, were great *beg*s he had no choice. Ferghanah was divided between himself and Jahāngīr Mīrzā, that is between himself and Sultān Ahmad Tambal who still controlled his brother, with Bābur taking Andijan and towns such as Uzgend in the east and Jahāngīr Mīrzā/Tambal given Akhsi and the areas to the north and west. The two brothers agreed jointly to attack Samarqand and after the city was taken Bābur would rule from there and Jahāngīr Mīrzā from Andijan. In essence Bābur and his brother's supporters seemed to be trying to replicate the appanage system of the previous generation but within their own nuclear family. His brother and Ahmad Tambal arrived in Bābur's camp to pay their respects and formalize the agreement. They dispersed to Akhsi and Andijan respectively and both sides released prisoners they had captured in the pervious year.

Returning to Andijan Bābur found himself little more than a nominal sovereign at seventeen years of age. He writes that ʿAlī Dust Taghaʾī's manner towards him had changed utterly. The man who had surrendered Andijan to Sultān Ahmad Tambal now dismissed some of Bābur's loyal supporters who had been with him during his *qazaqlïq* times, claiming that as some of these men had been friends of the martyred Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī, Bābur's old religious tutor, they would revenge themselves on him. ʿAli Dūst Taghaʾī must have been a mature man in 1500 as he had served Bābur's paternal grandfather, Abū Saʿid Mīrzā (d. 1469), as well as

[106] BN-M, f. 73b.

Bābur's father. He was a relative of Bābur's maternal grandmother, Isen Devlat Begim. In his character sketches of ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā's principal *beg*s Bābur not surprisingly denounces him as cheap, rebellious, hypocritical and egotistical among his other failings,[107] although Bābur himself and probably most Turco-Mongol warriors saw egotism as a manly virtue. To make matters worse in Bābur's eyes ʿAlī Dūst's son, Muhammad Dūst, began assuming royal airs, *salatïn dasturi,* at this time by holding formal dinners as well as conducting court and starting a textile "workshop," an implicit claim of sovereign status. Bābur believed they acted this way because Sultān Ahmad Tambal supported them, but whether his suspicions were correct or not his most telling comment on his situation in February and March 1500 was his admission that he was incapable of challenging their sovereign pretensions. " I had neither the authority nor power," Bābur bitterly recalls, "to forbid such unprecedented behavior, but was debased by father and son."[108]

Marriage—and Love

After Bābur describes how some of his allies were driven off while others challenged his legitimacy, he unexpectedly returns to the subject of his adolescent self-awareness by describing how in March 1500 he was at least partly distracted from his political troubles by two novel emotional upheavals. He was married to his first cousin, Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's daughter, ʿĀyisha Sultān Begim, and almost simultaneously fell in love—with a boy in the Andijan bazar. Bābur's description of these incidents is one of the most engaging passages in his memoir, remarkable for its apparently ingenuous display of emotions, which Muslim writers usually describe only in stylized verse forms.[109] Interrupting his relentless narrative of disastrous or inconsequential campaigns and catalogue of personal betrayals, Bābur's marriage and passionate infatuation startle the

[107] BN-M, f. 14b-15a.

[108] BN-M, f. 75a.

[109] See above Chapter I, n. 93 for discussion of the use of poetry to convey emotion not usually expressed in prose, citing Reynolds ed., *Interpreting the Self, Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition,* 94.

reader with their reminder of profound emotional attachments and fragile human relations amidst the wreckage of late Tīmūrid political life.

Bābur's engagement had of course been arranged, in his case when he visited his uncle Sultan Ahmad Mīrzā in Samarqand at age five. His description of the events following the actual marriage is unprecedented in its frankness but may describe a common reaction of a seventeen year old confronted with a bride seen only once before as a five year old boy—and the very normality of the emotions he describes is what makes the passage so remarkable. As he recalls these days:

> Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's daughter called ʿÂyisha Sultān Begim, to whom I was affianced while my uncle and father were yet living, reached me in Khujand. I took [her] in the month of Shaʿbān. Although I did not have negative feelings [towards her], yet this was [my] first marriage. On account of bashfulness and modesty I went every ten or fifteen or twenty days. Afterwards I no longer had even that much feeling, but I was still more shy. Then once a month or every forty days my mother *Khanïm* would repeatedly prod and harass me to visit her.[110]

Still, he visited often enough to conceive a child, a daughter who was born just after he seized Samarqand for the second time later in the year.

It is tempting to think but quite impossible to prove there might have been a connection between the emotional strain of this arranged marriage and the infatuation Bābur recalls conceiving for a boy in the Andijan bazar during this same brief lull in his campaigns. "During those times," he writes, "there was a boy in the camp bazar named Bāburī, his name being appropriate in that way." Then for the first time in his memoir Bābur inserts a verse fragment into the text, a Turkī poem.

I conceived an uncommon feeling for him.
Still worse, I made myself madly infatuated
with him.[111]

After seeing this boy, Bābur continues, "I had not felt affection for anyone. Indeed, I knew nothing of affection or love even from

[110] BN-M, f. 75a.
[111] BN-M, f. 75b.

report!"[112] New emotional stirrings prompted him to do what so many other literate love-sick, adolescents have done then and now, he composed a trite poem to express his feelings. Using Persian, the lingua franca of Turco-Mongol aristocrats in heavily Iranized Mawarannahr, Bābur writes:

May no person be as ravaged, lovesick and humiliated,
as I,
May no lover be as pitiless and unconcerned
as thou.[113]

Then with precisely the same phrase he used to describe his initial reaction to his young bride, Bābur remarks that his "bashfulness and modesty" prevented him from looking at Bāburī when he met him.

Bābur obviously retained a powerfully vivid memory of his infatuation with Bāburī, for he describes the psychological tumult he experienced with such evocative detail that he resembles one of the early nineteenth century Romantic poets or Goethe's *Young Werther*. Muslims, of course, had a rich romantic literary heritage of their own and it is quite likely that his account was modeled on the distraught male lover in the Arabian love story *Layla and Majnūn*, as rendered in Persian by several poets with whom he was familiar: Nizāmī, Jāmī and Amīr Khusrau of Delhi, and in Turkī by Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī of Harat.[114] This was a common literary idiom on which infatuated lovers could draw. Bābur himself invokes the story in one verse to explain his stylized, literary lovesick feelings. Other poets did the same, as exemplified by the seventeenth century Pashtu poet Khushāl Khan Khattak in one of his lyrics, in which he writes:

I wander heedless and distraught about the wilderness,
In every way I could be called a latter-day Majnūn.[115]

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[112] BN-M, f. 75b.

[113] Ibid., f. 75b.

[114] Brief descriptions of Nizāmīʾ and Jāmī's poems are found in A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London: George Allen & Unwin, repr. 1967), 124 & 447, and Amīr Khusrau's version in Mohammad Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, repr. 1974), 197-99. Navāʾī's text in Latin script is given by Ülkü Çelik, Alī-şir Nevāyi, *Leylī vü Mecnūn* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, 1996).

[115] D. N. Mackenzie ed. and trans., *Poems from the Divan of Khushāl Khān Khattak*

Whether or not this story informed Bābur's own prose account or supplied him with vocabulary to explain his feelings, he dwells more on this episode than any other emotional memory which he thinks to record in the text. As he continues:

> One day in this period of love and affection, *mihr u mahābbat*, I was walking in a lane with friends when I came face to face with Bāburī. I became so embarrassed I was almost completely nonplussed, unable look directly at him or speak to him. Bashful and ashamed I passed by.[116]

He says that at that moment he recalled an apposite Persian couplet of the writer, Muhammad Sālih, who was later to become a court historian of Shībānī Khan. He may actually have remembered the verse at this time, for in this section he makes a characteristically careful distinction between this Persian verse of Sālih's, the one he himself composed and other Persian and Turkī verses which he obviously added when he wrote this section of the text in India. Whether he recalled this couplet exactly then or a few days later Bābur chose the perfect verse to punctuate the story of his confusion.

> Whenever I observe my love I am badly disconcerted,
> My friends look at me and I look away.[117]

As he himself says, in these circumstances this verse was wonderfully appropriate.

In the days following this chance encounter Bābur recalled that he had recklessly indulged his newly discovered emotions. His account corroborates in an uncanny way the observation of Firdausī, the author of the eleventh century Persian-language epic poem, the *Shāh-nāmah*, who observes of adolescents, "For whoever tasted the wine of youth saw naught in the world but himself.[118] Bābur describes the self-absorbed carelessness and oblivious manner of a newly infatuated youth with the compelling sense of authenticity that gives his memoirs such power.

(London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965), 127. Bābur's poem is cited below, Chapter III.

[116] BN-M, f. 75b.

[117] Ibid., f. 76a.

[118] Quoted in a slightly different translation by Finn Theisen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1982), 36.

> "In that excess of desire and affection," he writes, "on account of youthfulness and overwhelming passion, I wandered shoeless and bareheaded through street and lane, in vineyard and garden, neither respecting friends or strangers nor caring for myself or others."[119]

"Sometimes," he continues, "I wandered out alone like a madman into the hills and steppe. Sometimes I searched in gardens and neighborhoods, lane by lane. It was not my decision to walk or sit; it was not my choice to come or go."[120] Bābur concludes this section with an unidentified Turkī verse:

Neither have I the power to go nor have I the strength to stay,
You have enslaved me in this condition, O heart.[121]

Return to Samarqand

It is tempting to imagine Bābur might have also intended this verse to be a metaphor of his political situation, his compelling desire to re-take Samarqand, a subject which he now returns to in the narrative as abruptly as he had left it to recall his emotional turmoil. Suddenly, just about the time Bābur was wandering lovesick about the lanes and outlying districts of Andijan, the road to Samarqand opened again. Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā, Bābur's cousin and nominal ally whom he had left in Samarqand in 1498, faced a rebellion of a group of his father's Mongol *beg*s known as Tarkhans.[122] Simultaneously, and perhaps in concert with the Tarkhans, Mahmūd Khan sent a Mongol army from Tashkent to take Samarqand on his own account. Allied briefly the two groups of Mongols quickly fell out, and unable to take the city the Tarkhans then sent a message to Bābur inviting him to reoccupy the city. In May or June 1500 Bābur set off again from Andijan toward Samarqand, learning just as they left that Sultān Ahmad Tambal's brother had broken the truce with Bābur, probably with Tambal's blessing or instigation. Not only did he refuse to evacuate Uzgend, as required by the agreement, but he seized the major fortress of Ush.

Given this threatening situation to the east and his suspicion of

[119] BN-M, f. 76a.
[120] Ibid., f. 76a.
[121] Ibid., f. 76a.
[122] See BN-B, p. 31 & n. 4 and TR-R, p. 55 n. 3.

his *beg*s, Qambar ʿAlī Mughul and ʿAlī Dust Taghaʾī, Bābur decided to press on to Samarqand where, he was told, Khwājah Yahyā Ahrārī, the son of his Naqshbandī sūfī patron saint, Khwājah Ahrār, supported him.[123] However, just as he and his men planned to take the city by stealth they learned that Shībānī Khan had occupied Bukhara and was marching on Samarqand, which he entered shortly afterwards. Bābur and his men then retreated to Tīmūr's second capital Shahr-i sabz, south of Samarqand, to join the Tarkhans.[124] He heard that Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā offered the city to the Uzbeks in exchange for his father's old lands. Having been deprived of support by the Tarkhan's rebellion he may well have done so, but whatever the exact agreement it did him little good. He was executed by Shībānī Khan almost as soon as the Uzbek leader arrived outside the city. Shortly afterwards Uzbeks, probably on Shībānī Khān's orders, killed the Naqshbandī *shaykh* Khwājah Yahyā Ahrārī and two of his sons whom Shībānī, Bābur writes, had earlier expelled from Samarqand. While Shībānī denied responsibility for the Ahrārī murders he had good reason to fear their half-century religious and political connection with Tīmūrids. Bābur sarcastically remarks of Shībānī's denial, which he obviously disbelieved, that the denial was worse than the act. He added that if rulers could not control their men the authority of *khan*s and *pādshāhs* was meaningless![125]

In the midst of these events ʿAlī Dūst Taghaʾī and his son, Muhammad Dūst, defected to Sultān Ahmad Tambal, confirming Bābur's earlier suspicion of their loyalty. Or perhaps their actions led him, writing in India so many years later, to reflect on signs that now suggested to him their earlier disloyal intentions. Then just after Shībānī Khan took Samarqand Bābur's new-found allies, the Tarkhan Mongols, abandoned him and joined Khusrau Shāh who by then was the de facto ruler of the northeastern Oxus region,

[123] This is one of the few instances in Bābur's entire narrative where another historian, in this case Mullā Bināʾī, supplies corroborating details. See Kubo ed., *Shaybānī-nāma,* 66-71.

[124] Shahr-i sabz is the name of the region of Tīmūr's birthplace also known as Kish, as well as the city. For a history of the region and the architectural remains of the city see M. E. Masson and G. A. Pugachenkova, "Shakhri Syabz Pri Timure i Ulugh Beke ("Shahr-i Sabz From Tīmūr to Ulūgh Beg")," J. M. Rogers trans. *Iran* 26 (1978), 103-26.

[125] BN-M, f. 81a. Kubo, *Shaybānī-nāma*, 77.

including southern Mawarannahr and northern Afghanistan. By this time Khusrau Shāh had blinded the romantic Tīmūrid Sultān Masʿūd Mīrzā, whose youthful guardian he had been, and murdered Masʿūd Mīrzā's brother, Baysunghur Mīrzā, as part of his campaign to become an independent ruler in this former Tīmūrid appanage.[126] In Bābur's eyes Khusrau Shāh had become as great an enemy to the Tīmūrids as Sultān Ahmad Tambal, and he later speaks of this man with equal hatred and contempt.

At this point in the narrative Bābur once again recalls his despair. "We were deprived," he writes, "of city and province, uncertain as to whether to leave or to remain,"[127] a literal verbal echo of his lovesick state in Andijan and a reprise of his hopelessness after first abandoning Samarqand in 1498. Bābur now thought of fleeing from the Uzbeks to Mughulistan to seek the help of his younger Mongol uncle Sultān Ahmad Khan (Kichik Khan), but this idea was obviously no more than a reflection of his desperation, as the Mongol lands were far too distant. Instead, he decided to circle around Samarqand to the south and east through Khusrau Shāh's territories, a difficult choice as the Qipchaq Turk had virtually declared war on his former Tīmūrid overlords. Bābur and his men quickly rode southeast to the Kamrud river and then struggled north up the river valley over a perilous steep, narrow pass to the Zarafshan river due east of Samarqand, suffering desertions and the loss of horses and camels as they went.

Camping on the north side of the Zarafshan Bābur and his "lightly armed" men debated what to do next. By the evidence of Bābur's narrative they must have felt desperate; their situation was little better than that following his retreat from Samarqand in 1498. Bābur reports he had 240 men—"good and bad"—with him in camp, while Shībānī Khan was moving about the area with an estimated 3-4,000 Uzbeks, leaving Samarqand garrisoned with an additional five to six hundred men. Not only was Bābur himself vastly outnumbered but his mother, wife and relatives were also vulnerable to Uzbek attack. After Bābur had left Andijan in May or June they had also abandoned the town, probably because they felt threatened by Sultān Ahmad Tambal.[128] At this time they were staying in Ura Tipa, just north of his camp and like Bābur himself

[126] BN-M, fs. 58a-b.
[127] BN-M, f. 81a.
[128] BN-M, f. 86b.

they were within a days march of Uzbek forces in Samarqand.

Thus when Bābur and his small force now decided to try to take Samarqand by surprise they were acting from weakness rather than strength, as Bābur makes clear by his description of their plan. He and his men calculated, he says, that the Uzbeks would not have had time to consolidate their control of a city long governed by Tīmūrids. Bābur writes that Samarqandis would never help the Uzbeks and therefore if he and his men acted quickly he thought "something might come of it!"—a good precis of the fortuitous and contingent nature of his career before 1526. After explaining their plan to scale the walls by stealth in the early morning Bābur concludes "Whatever was God's will would be."[129] At this point in the narrative Bābur recalls that the night before the attack he had a dream in which his Naqshbandī patron saint, Khwājah ʿUbaydullah Ahrār, appeared and assured him of victory. What Bābur describes is a dream sequence that may have been prompted by the spiritual training of Ahrārī Naqshbandīs like himself, in which *murīd*s or disciples were shown how to have *suhbat*, or spiritual communion with Ahrār.[130] This rare reference to spiritual solace reinforces the sense of fatalism Bābur evidently felt at this time. Had he commanded 5,000 men before Samarqand his anxiety might not have needed to call forth Ahrār's comforting image. Yet "I actually took Samarqand a few days later," he writes after describing the dream.[131]

With this improbable success Bābur experienced at age 19 the greatest triumph of his early career. In the midst of relating how he and his men seized Samarqand he interrupts the narrative with one of his several autobiographical bookmarks, reminding them first, that he had restored the honor of the Tīmūrid dynasty and second, that he had outdone all other Tīmūrids by his achievement. He had, he proudly reports, even surpassed the great Husayn Bayqara of Harat, whom Bābur had earlier characterized as *karīm al-tarafayn*, doubly noble because of his descent from two Tīmūrids.[132]

In Bābur's eyes Husayn Bayqara and his sons represented the Tīmūrid elite; in another passage he refers to Husayn Bayqara as

[129] BN-M, 83a.
[130] See below chapter 3 for a discussion of Naqshbandī spiritual exercises.
[131] BN-M, f. 83b.
[132] BN-M, f. 163b.

the *asīl pādshāh*, the high-born emperor.[133] When therefore he spends a page favorably comparing the magnitude of his second occupation of Samarqand with Husayn Bayqara's conquest of Harat in 1470 he is making one of the most important political statements in the *Vaqā'i'*. Writing in India he is implicitly claiming to possess the stature in the Tīmūrid world in 1527-29 that Husayn Bayqara enjoyed prior to his death in 1506. After describing how "the great, the noble and the important men of the city" came to welcome him back to Samarqand in the fall of 1500, Bābur proudly observes he had expelled the "Uzbek strangers and enemies" who had occupied Samarqand earlier in the year, and recovered the "devastated and pillaged province" for "our family."[134] "Sultān Husayn Mīrzā," he remarks, "had similarly taken Harat by surprise," but to a discerning person, Bābur points out, it was obvious that the two events were not comparable.

> *First*, this is because Sultān Husayn was an experienced pādshāh of mature years.
> *Second*, this is because his adversary was Yādgār Muhammad Nāsir Mīrzā, an inexperienced boy of eighteen years.
> *Third*, this is because Mīr ʿAlī Mīrakhur, a person who knew the conditions within the enemy [camp] sent people to the Mīrzā [who] caught the adversary unawares.
> *Fourth*, this is because his adversary was not in the fortress but in the *Bāgh-i Zāghān*, the Ravens' Garden. Muhammad and his followers were so falling-down drunk that night, that Yādgār Muhammad Mīrzā had only three men at his gate and they were also drunk.
> *Fifth*, this is because, the first time he thus came by surprise he took [the city].[135]

Even if Bābur is belittling Husayn Bayqara's achievement his account still reminds readers to be cautious about accepting court historians' epic portrayal of such encounters in their histories. In this comparison neither Bābur nor Husayn Bayqara fought a memorable battle to win a great city.

Bābur then contrasts the ease with which Husayn Bayqara took Harat with his own experience before Samarqand in 1500. "When I took Samarqand," he writes:

[133] Ibid., f. 163b.
[134] BN-M, f. 85a.
[135] Ibid., fs. 85a-85b.

> I was in my nineteenth year. I had neither seen nor experienced very much.
> *Second*, this is because my enemy was such a man as Shibaq Khan, a person of mature years, who was extremely knowledgeable and experienced.
> *Third*, this is because no person came out to me from Samarqand, although I was beloved by the people of the city, but no one could think of doing so for fear of Shibaq Khan.
> *Fourth*, this is because my adversary was in the fort and the fort was taken and the adversary driven off.
> *Fifth*, this is because once [in 1498 we] came with designs on Samarqand and [our] adversary was alerted. The second time God made it right. Samarqand was won.[136]

Just in case his readers might suspect that these favorable comparisons are just a little bit exaggerated, he concludes with his first rendition of the perennial autobiographical claim that he is telling the truth. "No criticism of people is intended from these words," he writes, "This statement is accurate as given above. I do not intend to aggrandize myself by writing this. What was written was the truth."[137] Bābur fails to point out, of course, that whereas Husayn Bayqara had held Harat for thirty-six years he himself was driven out of Samarqand a short time later.

In the autumn and winter of 1500, though, poets composed chronograms to commemorate the date of his victory. Writers such as the poet and historian Mullā Bannāʾī who had recently been patronized by Shībānī Khan, now eulogized Bābur, forecasting his rise from the status of a Tīmūrid prince to that of an Iranian monarch. He wrote that "My *mīrzā* who will be *shāh* of sea and land," while pointedly remarking in another poem that he could not continue to produce more verse without food and clothing or some kind of grant![138] Shībānī Khan himself withdrew with his army and recently arrived relatives to Bukhara. Nearby forts reaffirmed their Tīmūrid allegiance as Uzbeks were driven out or commanders adjusted to new political realities. "Our affairs," Bābur observes, "were very much improved."[139] His mother, wife and relations also arrived from nearby Ura Tipa, which they had only reached after

[136] Ibid., f. 85b.
[137] Ibid., fs. 85b-86a.
[138] BN-M, fs. 87a-b
[139] BN-M, f. 86b.

suffering many unspecified hardships on the trip from Andijan. Crowning this triumphal moment Bābur's first daughter was born to his young wife, ʿÂyisha Sultān Begim, just after she arrived in Samarqand. Unfortunately the baby died after little more than a month, which if Bābur had been superstitious, he might have taken as a bad omen.

However much Bābur's fortunes had improved he still commanded only a few hundred men. Winter was setting in and Shībānī Khan, surprised perhaps but not defeated, remained close at hand with thousands of horsemen in Bukhara. "After the Samarqand conquest," therefore, Bābur "repeatedly sent ambassadors and commanders to seek help on every side from *khan*s and sultāns, *amīrs* and border lords."[140] This effort produced fewer than 1000 men, a few hundred of whom ostensibly came from his brother Jahāngīr, but were commanded by Khalīl, Ahmad Tambal's younger brother, who had fought against Bābur the previous year. None of these reinforcements, most of whom were probably Mongols, seem to have had any particular connection to Bābur's family but they were enough for him to chance a pitched battle with Shībānī Khan in April or May of the following year, 1501. Just prior to the battle Bābur heard that fifteen hundred horsemen from Sultān Mahmūd Khan and another one to two thousand commanded by one of the Tarkhans were camped nearby and would arrive within a day, but he says that astrological considerations convinced him to begin the battle prematurely. These considerations were, he writes with typical candour, "probably worthless; [we] hastened without cause."[141] However, in this case Bābur may have just been second guessing himself so long after the fact. It is quite likely that the troops, which he implies could have tipped the balance in his favor, were just biding their time to see how the battle developed. In particular his Mongol uncle, Sultān Mahmūd Khan, had usually been reluctant to help his nephew beyond offering friendly greetings and vague promises.

About ten days after marching beyond the walls of Samarqand to a nearby meadow, time spent equipping his army and digging defensive works, the armies of Bābur and Shībānī Khan fought the pitched cavalry battle of Sar-i Pūl, the "bridge-head" just northeast

[140] BN-M, f. 86b.
[141] BN-M, f. 89a.

of the city but south of the Zarafshan river. Bābur doesn't give an estimate of the troop strengths on either side, but by early afternoon he suffered a devastating defeat with the loss of many commanders and men. The fallen included, curiously, Khalīl Sultān, whose loyalty seems inexplicable in view of his part in his brother's struggles with Bābur in Ferghanah. Many survivors fled to nearby Ura Tipa or south to Qunduz or Hisar in Khusrau Shāh's territories. Many of the Mongols with Bābur began plundering his remaining troops as soon as the battle seemed lost, prompting another of his bitter remarks on the "habits of the wretched Mongols who acted this way not just this once but always."[142] Bābur and a few men forded and swam to the northern side of the river where more of his men were unhorsed, plundered and killed by these "vile Mongols."[143] Finally they were able to recross the river to the west of the battle zone and make their way back to Samarqand, where they reentered the walled inner city on the northeastern side. Bābur lost the battle to a superior force, an experienced commander and, perhaps most of all, to a disciplined nomadic cavalry who were capable, as Bābur enviously remembered a quarter of a century later, of charging, wheeling and retreating in strict formation.[144] Shībānī's army probably more closely resembled Tīmūr's than the ad hoc coalition Bābur had patched together in the previous months.

Now surrounded inside Samarqand Bābur and his small force were besieged by the Uzbeks, who at least once made a sustained but unsuccessful attack on the walls with seven or eight hundred men using ladders. However, in the ensuing months Shībānī Khan was largely content to blockade the city at a distance while staging small-scale attacks and feigning others in order to drive the defenders to the state nervous of exhaustion that Bābur himself describes. In the late summer the harvest came and went with no food entering the city. By then "the condition of people deteriorated even to the extent that the poor and indigent began eating dogs and donkeys."[145] Bābur dispatched envoys and men in every direction, but

[142] BN-M, f. 90a.
[143] BN-M, f. 90b.
[144] BN-M, f. 90a.
[145] BN-M, f. 93b.

"help came from no one." He then goes on to lament—and realistically observe:

> Since [even] in those times when we were strong and powerful and had not suffered any kind of defeat or loss no one offered help or support, why should anyone help us now? Given this earlier experience it was probably pointless to try to hold out.... [Even] a brave and experienced *pādshāh* like Sultān Husayn Mīrzā did not help us, did not send an envoy to encourage us [but] sent...an envoy to Shībānī Khan.[146]

Bābur's inability to secure aid from his most powerful Tīmūrid relative at a time when five thousand men might have saved Samarqand may have been partly due to Shībānī's Khan's growing reputation and Bābur's own marked lack of prestige. Husayn Bayqara may also have been unwilling to intervene for a variety of personal reasons ranging from his arthritis and his advanced age to his reluctance to leave the urban pleasures of Harat for a new campaign. Whatever considerations may have influenced Husayn Bayqara, his inactivity, or his failure even to write to Bābur while contacting Shībānī Khan, suggests he did not possess the sense of shared interest that distinguished the Uzbek federation or the feeling of common Tīmūrid dynastic interest that Bābur later claimed motivated him to travel from Kabul to Harat in 1506 to counter the growing Uzbek threat to that city.

No help arrived, either from Husayn Bayqara or his uncle Mahmūd Khan. "In despair troops and peasants, one by one and two by two abandoned the fortress."[147] Important men and those close to Bābur began going over the walls, even such prominent *beg*s as Ways Lāgharī fled. "We became," writes Bābur, "completely desperate. All hope was lost."[148] Leaving behind his sister, Khānzāda Begim, for Shībānī Khan as a kind of marital ransom, Bābur, his mother, a few women and a few remaining *beg*s, including interestingly, Qambar ʿAlī Mughul, fled the city around midnight.[149]

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[146] BN-M, f. 94a. The meaning of part of this passage, rendered here as "Given our experience it was probably pointless to hold out," is obscure. See the variant textual readings supplied by Mano, n.1 p. 138.

[147] BN-M, f. 94b.

[148] Ibid., f. 95a.

[149] Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat describes this abandonment as a "ransom." TR-T, f. 118a. Bābur's daughter, born in 1523, Gulbadan Begim, reports that Bābur agreed to marry his sister to Shībānī Khan as a price of his escape. HN, f. 3b.

Whatever the exact nature of the agreement Bābur had made with Shībānī Khan he and his entourage still fled as refugees, hungry and fearing for their lives if captured. During the next four or five hours they wandered about lost in the irrigation canals and lanes surrounding the city, a maze described by the English geologist W. Rickmer Rickmers early in the twentieth century.

> Such an irrigated plain is a perfect maze of ariks [arïqs] and ditches, roads and paths crossing each other in every direction. In between are fields, groups of trees, villages, also bits of swamp and untilled steppe. Finding one's way is extremely difficult, even more so than on a glacier or among desert dunes, for steering by the compass is impossible owing to the multitude of irritating obstacles.[150]

They finally got clear of the city's suburbs by dawn and riding hard to the east all the next day they finally stopped in the afternoon to kill one of their horses for food. Only the next morning did they arrive at a friendly village where they were given meat, flour melons and grapes. "We went," Bābur remembers, "from such distress to such abundance, from such misfortune to such safety."[151] At this point in the text Bābur says that four or five times in his life he had endured cycles of "hardship and rest, difficulties and repose" and this was the first time. Yet by the evidence of his narrative, his earlier withdrawal from Samarqand was equally traumatic and resulted in his first *qazaqlïq* period. On only two other occasions was he in such danger, in 1502 and in 1512, after his final defeat by the Uzbeks and third expulsion from Samarqand. And at that later date he still held Kabul, even if he finally abandoned Mawarannahr.

The Tīmūrid Denouement

His mother and two other women accompanied Bābur on his frantic flight from Samarqand, but many other Tīmūrid women were left behind. His elder sister, Khānzādah Begim, was in fact taken captive and married by Shībānī Khan.[152] Others who had also

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[150] W. Rickmer Rickmers," *The Duab of Turkistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 61-2.
[151] Ibid., f. 96a.
[152] BN-M, f. 8b.

been left behind in Samarqand for want of horses were allowed to leave and over the next few months straggled out and walked to forts still loyal to Bābur or within Sultān Mahmūd Khān's territories. Even the Uzbeks, who were considerably more ruthless than most late Tīmūrids, usually spared women. Bābur met Ātūn, one of his mother's female servants as he passed Pishgar, northeast of Samarqand, which she had reached by herself on foot. Years later he rewarded Ātūn for her loyalty by the grant of a village near Kabul.[153] His aunt, Mihrnigār Khanïm and his maternal grandmother, Isen Devlat Begim, were also allowed to leave Samarqand. His grandmother managed to join Bābur with a retinue of ill-nourished family members and servants only months later at Dikhat, a village near Ura Tipa, where he had finally halted on his flight from Samarqand with the three women and his handful of "unarmed" *beg*s and warriors. Bābur may have chosen Dikhat because its inhabitants had an estimated forty thousand sheep and could presumably spare enough for him and his men during the winter.[154] After establishing a camp there he once again went hat in hand to see his Mongol uncle in Tashkent, where he also found his aunt Mihrnigār Khanïm, who had made her way there from Samarqand.

Ūmīdvār idim, "I hoped," Bābur writes conveying the powerless deference he must have then felt, *kim Khan dadam riʿāyat ve ʿināyat māqāmïda bulub*, "that my uncle the Khan in his condescension and graciousness," *vilāyat ve parganah bergayelar*, "would grant province or district." Consistent with his earlier behavior toward Bābur, the Khan promised him something, in this case Ura Tipa, then held by Muhammad Husayn Mīrzā Dughlat, but probably did so just to get rid of his nephew, who left Tashkent for that fort. At Ura Tipa Bābur spent a few days with his Mongol in-law, who was the also the husband of Khūbnigār Khanïm, one of Bābur's maternal aunts. He was the Dughlat to whom Mahmūd Khan had given the fort originally in 1495. He did not relinquish it to Bābur, who even while writing this memoir near the end of his life seems to have been unwilling to concede that Sultān Mahmūd Khan had never been prepared to offer him more than token encouragement or that

[153] BN-M, f. 241, where Bābur mentions stopping at "Âtūn's village," presumably by his manner of reference but not absolutely certainly, the same woman.
[154] BN-M, fs. 99b and 97a.

the his uncle might have preferred to support his Mongol kinsmen over his spectacularly unsuccessful Tīmūrid nephew. Reflecting on Muhammad Husayn Mīrzā's refusal to give up the town Bābur rather touchingly muses: "I don't know [if] he acted on his own or whether there was a signal from on high."[155]

Returning disappointed to nearby Dikhat Bābur spent the winter in the village as his situation steadily deteriorated. His fortunes had been spiraling downward from the moment he and his men rode out of Andijan in 1496 on their way to attack Samarqand for the first time. He twice arrested his decline—reoccupying Andijan and then recapturing Samarqand—but at each of these moments the number of his original supporters had declined and the geographic extent of his authority had contracted. By the winter of 1501 he controlled no forts, virtually no territory and commanded—or more accurately—cajoled merely a handful of followers. During this interregnum in the winter of 1501-02 Bābur spent hours, or days, wandering about *yalang ayaq*, "barefoot," in the mountains. Some of his remaining troops left for Andijan, apparently Qambar ʿAlī among them, because they could not bear this *qazaqlïqlar* existence.[156] Andijan was then being held by Sultān Ahmad Tambal, who still had Bābur's brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā with him. Then in the middle of what was an extremely severe winter Shībānī Khan sent raiders across the frozen Khujand River in Bābur's direction and to counter them Bābur rode out with what he says were a small number of men, several of whom died in the terrible cold.[157] As the Uzbeks retired before he arrived, Bābur himself rode back to Dikhat, but he camped in the safer nearby hills as the Shībānī was rumored to be planning a spring campaign against Ura Tipa.

In what was perhaps an act of somber reflection on his stark situation Bābur now engraved some lines from the Iranian poet Saʿdī's *Būstān* on a rock by a spring near where he camped.[158] It was customary, he writes, to inscribe verses and aphorisms on rocks in these hills. Evoking a sense of melancholy stoicism which must have fit his mood very well, the lines from the thirteenth century poet describe the transitory nature of life in a fashion typical of classical Iranian poetry, whether ʿUmar Khayyām or Saʿdī himself.

[155] BN-M, fs. 96b-97a.
[156] BN-M, f. 97b.
[157] BN-M, f. 98a.
[158] Sa'dī's work is summarized by Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, 186-213.

In this particular verse Saʿdī tells how Jamshīd, one of the legendary kings of pre-Islamic Iran, had inscribed these lines on another spring in an earlier time.

I heard that the fortunate Jamshīd inscribed on a stone at a fountainhead:

At this spring many like us who boasted,
Passed away in the twinkling of an eye.
With valor and might we seized the world,
And yet we did not take it with us to the grave.[159]

Bābur may have felt the pathos of this inscription to have been all the greater as his spring bubbled out near a tomb.

When warm weather again brought Shībānī Khan raiding on the outskirts of Ura Tipa Bābur became desperate. "It crossed my mind," he writes, that "to wander homeless and penniless from mountain to mountain, without place or province was absurd," and so once again he went off to see his Mongol uncle in Tashkent.[160] Arriving there in June 1502 he found himself scarcely better off than before, except that, as he said, Mahmūd Khan was a relative and not a stranger. Most of Bābur's retainers had fled, and consistent with his past behavior Mahmūd Khan largely ignored Bābur, who partly occupied himself by visiting his relatives, including Shāh Begim, his maternal grandmother. Bābur also used his enforced leisure to write more poetry.

He had already revealed his ambition to be recognized as a poet when he pointedly copied one of his verses on the outside of a letter he had sent in 1500 to the Harat poet and literary patron, Mīr ʿAlī

[159] BN-M, f. 99a. For a photograph of what appears to be this inscription see A. Mukhtarov, "Inscriptions With Bābur's Name in the Upper Reaches of the Zarafshan," *Afghanistan* No. 25 (Sept. 1972), 49-56. There is no reason to believe this inscription was a forgery as villagers who knew of the inscription had not tried to sell or publicize it. The author says, however, that this inscription is dated 917 a.h. and that Bābur may have forgotten that he had it done after evacuating Samarqand the third and last time in 1512. Yet, it was 918 a. h. when Bābur abandoned Samarqand for the last time, so this suggestion does not resolve the discrepancy either. However, from the photograph he includes in his article 907 rather than 917 appears to be the date inscribed just below and to the left of Bābur's name. There looks to be a **.** or **0** with a very slight vertical slash, but not a **1**. In any event the author also mentions several other inscriptions in the area attributed to Bābur, some definitely dated to 907 a. h.

[160] BN-M, f. 99b.

Shīr Navāʾī, just after he took Samarqand in 1500. He had written a few lines of Turkī and Persian verse during the second Samarqand occupation, and in the hills above Dikhat Bābur composed two lines of Turkī verse to welcome a poet who came from nearby Hisar apparently seeking patronage. Bābur's memory of this encounter or, more particularly his decision to mention the two lines he wrote at this turbulent time, suggests how seriously he took poetry and how much he wished readers to see him as a literate, cultured man.

Indeed, Bābur begins his narrative of his visit to Tashkent, not with a discussion of his desperate political situation, but by introducing a Turkī *rubāʿī* he had written earlier. Concerned whether his rhyme scheme was appropriate for Turkī verse Bābur says he presented the *rubāʿī* to Mahmūd Khan who, he remarks, "was a refined man who recited poetry, although he had few successful *ghazals*."[161] Disappointingly the Khan did not give Bābur a categorical answer, "apparently because he had not thoroughly studied the technicalities of verse."[162] Bābur's discussion of this poem seems to be a clever compositional device to advance the narrative, because the verse returns the narrative to politics. The poem was not just a literary exercise but a *cri de coeur*, a cry for help by a terminally frustrated Tīmūrid prince. By reciting it to—and at—Mahmūd Khan Bābur made a gentle remonstrance to his uncle, an oblique literary protest, perhaps the only expression he could possibly make to the Khan himself given his refugee status. In the *rubāʿī* Bābur alludes to his desperate state in the first two lines.

No one cares for a man in peril,
No one gladdens the exile's heart.[163]

Bābur probably found Mahmūd Khan's failure as a poet less significant than his political and military deficiencies, for he returns to the narrative by recording a condescending description of an inconsequential expedition Mahmūd Khan organized to prevent Sultān Ahmad Tambal from seizing Ura Tipa, then still held by the Khan's Dughlat appointee.

Whatever diversion Bābur found in poetry or accompanying this

[161] Ibid., f. 100a.
[162] Ibid., f. 100a.
[163] Ibid., f. 100a.

expedition, during which he composed another mournful verse, it was not enough to dispel his gloomy awareness that "He had no kingdom or hope of a kingdom."[164] Finally, in desperation he planned to flee Mawarannahr altogether.

> This kind of vagabondage, homelessness and despair became intolerable. I said [to myself] that living with such difficulties it would be well if I would take myself off. Rather than people seeing me in such misery and wretchedness it would be well if I went on my own. Resolving to go to Khitai [north China] I decided to take myself off.[165]

Khitai, the old Qara Qitai territories north of China proper, was evidently Bābur's code for Mughulistan, where he could visit his younger Chaghatay Mongol uncle, Ahmad Khan, or as he usually refers to him, Kichik or "Young" Khan. On the evidence of his narrative Bābur felt trapped in Tashkent, and believed rightly or wrongly that if he could get Mahmūd Khan's permission to leave he could begin to resurrect his career further east, where he may have felt that the turbulent state of the Mongol-dominated region offered opportunities for young adventurers.

Just as he was considering this plan Ahmad Khan himself appeared in Mawarannahr, arriving in Tashkent with an army of 1-2,000 horsemen, summoned there by his older brother Mahmūd Khan after Shībānī Khan had occupied Samarqand. Bābur's plans for "Khitai" were shelved and he suddenly found himself part of a large army marching against Sultān Ahmad Tambal, whose former close ties with Mahmūd Khan and his family now seem to have completely ruptured, perhaps due to Tambal's expanding power in Ferghanah. Assigned a contingent of Mongol troops Bābur joined the campaign against Tambal. He and his allies, with an estimated and probably exaggerated combined force of nearly 30,000 men gathered from Tashkent, quickly took Ush, and most other fortresses nearby renewed their allegiance to Bābur. However, Andijan still remained in Tambal's hands. Bābur also moved to capture his old fortress, but Tambal surprised his force in a dawn attack on Bābur's poorly situated, unguarded camp. It was his own inexperience that caused him to be negligent, Bābur writes in one of several admissions of tactical failures that startle and engage the reader

[164] BN-M, f. 101a.
[165] BN-M, f. 101b.

unaccustomed to such royal candor in pre-modern histories. In the following melee Bābur came face to face with Tambal himself, who severely wounded him with his sword just as Bābur also suffered an arrow wound to his thigh. Many of Bābur's men were lost and he himself retreated back to Ush, where his Chaghatay Mongol allies administered a new dose of political realism as well as eventually seeing to his wounds.

Having just lost many of the troops assigned to him by Mahmūd Khan, Bābur now met with his uncle near Ush. Given his conspicuous failure, he cannot have been surprised when the latter announced he was transferring the forts which had come over to Bābur to the Khan's younger brother, Ahmad Khan, as Ahmad Khan's own lands in Mughulistan were so distant. Bābur was to be given Akhsi and the territory north of Syr Darya river, and when they retook Samarqand he was to have that city while all Ferghanah was to go to Ahmad Khan. "They probably deceived me with these words," reflected Bābur as he wrote more than twenty years later. "Later events would have shown what was possible. Yet there was nothing for it. Whether I liked it or not, I agreed."[166]

Yet shortly afterwards as Bābur was riding with Mahmūd Khan back to see Ahmad Khan, Qambar ʿAlī Mughul rode up alongside Bābur and gave him, Bābur reports, the kind of calculating advice that kept Central Asian politics in turmoil. Qambar ʿAlī told Bābur he should retain Ush, Uzgend and Marginan as a base, make an alliance with Sultān Ahmad Tambal, attack and drive out the Mongols and divide up Ferghanah with Tambal. It must have occurred to Bābur that he had few troops of his own, that Tambal had just defeated and nearly killed him and still held Bābur's brother Jahāngīr Mīrzā as a Tīmūrid surrogate for his own ambition. Whatever his exact thoughts at this moment he rejected Qambar ʿAlī's advice, replying, he remembers with evident satisfaction, that the Khans were his close relatives and he would rather be their *naukar*, their dependent, rather than Tambal's *pādshāh,* his king.[167] His advice rejected, Qambar ʿAlī defected back to Tambal a short time later.

[166] BN-M, f. 108a.
[167] BN-M, f. 108b.

After being treated by a Mongol surgeon at Ahmad Khan's camp, Bābur was assigned two thousand Mongol troops so he could take Akhsi, which the Khans had assigned to him in their provisional distribution of territory in Ferghanah and Samarqand. Mahmūd and Ahmad Khan themselves began besieging Tambal in Andijan. Akhsi was then held by one of Sultān Ahmad Tambal's brothers, who made a tentative agreement with Bābur and admitted him and his men into the outer fortress, allowing them to camp in buildings Bābur's father had constructed there. He was joined there by Jahāngīr Mīrzā, who had now escaped from Tambal. At about this time Tambal opened the final act of the Tīmūrid century in Mawarannahr by offering fealty to Shībānī Khan and inviting the Uzbek leader into the Ferghanah valley.

With the Uzbeks coming from the west, the Khans were forced to raise the siege of Andijan and they retreated eastward out of the valley. This left Tambal free to reinforce his brother in Akhsi, which he did despite Bābur's presence in the outer fort with one to two hundred men. In describing Tambal's surprise entry into the citadel Bābur admits that someone should have been stationed at the bridge entrance to Akhsi, and once again concedes that the oversight was due to inexperience.[168] Unlike his earlier admission of poor planning, in this passage he writes in the third person, implying that this particular military disaster might have been due to some other, unnamed person's fault. Once again the oversight resulted in battle with Tambal, this time within Akhsi. Once again Bābur was defeated and lost most of his men. By the time he got clear of the town only eight men remained with him, and as his men's horses flagged, he fled alone into the nearby hills pursued by Tambal's men as dusk fell.

With his pursuers close enough behind to shout to Bābur untruthfully that Tambal had captured both his brothers, Bābur retreated further into the hills. Eventually Bābur agreed to accompany two of the men who had come from Tambal, who swore an oath on the Quran they would now serve Bābur and help him find a path that would allow him to rejoin his Chaghatay uncles. With these two men he spent a second day and night as a fugitive. He recalls how he felt the second evening after the battle when he stood with these two men shivering in the winter cold in an aban-

[168] BN-M, f. 111a.

doned garden in the small village of Karnaon. "It was winter. It was very cold. They found an old *pūstīn* [a sheepskin coat]; I put it on. They found a cup of millet soup; I drank it. I was greatly comforted."[169] Then just before the text breaks off in the midst of Bābur's narrative of these wanderings, he describes his melancholy reflections when one man who joined him later that second evening admitted he had come as an agent of Tambal's brother.

> Learning this left me with a strange feeling. Nothing in the world is worse than worrying about life. 'Speak the truth!' I said [to the headman] 'If things are liable to get worse I will perform my ablutions.' I well understood my impotence. I went into a corner of the garden. Thinking of myself, I said whether a man live 100 or 1000 years he will come to an end.[170]

Yet Bābur survived even this debacle, although it is impossible to say exactly how. Some of his men were near and Jahāngīr Mīrzā still led half of Bābur's small force somewhere to the north. Eventually Bābur found his way to his Mongol uncles, reassembled his small force and fought with the Khāns in June 1503, when they were all defeated by Shībānī Khan.[171] Shībānī then rewarded Tambal and his brother Bāyizīd with Andijan and Akhsi, while Tambal's brother, Beg Tilbah, was given Marginan. However, this arrangement lasted for less than a year, because Tambal almost immediately tried to expand his own territory by conquering Tashkent. At this point Shībānī Khan returned to Ferghanah, defeated and executed Tambal, his brother and their allies, and made his kinsman, Jani Beg Sultan the ruler of the valley.[172]

Following this loss Bābur no longer had any Tīmūrid or Chingīzid relatives to turn to in Ferghanah, and evidently spent the next year in hiding in the mountains near the village of Sukh, southeast of Isfarah. In June-July 1504 he finally emerged with the remnants of his men, his mother and a few relatives on a march south-southwest to find a new kingdom in Khurasan. He may initially have hoped to get help, position or territory from the last surviving Tīmūrid ruler, the aging Sultān Husayn Bayqara of Harat.

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[169] BN-M, f. 117b.

[170] BN-M, fs. 118a-118b.

[171] See Annette Beveridge's critique of the passage that purports to explain how Bābur was rescued. BN-B, pp. 182-85 and Appendix D, ix-xv.

[172] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii*, 39-40.

"In the month of Muharram (June-July 1504)," writes Bābur, "with Khurasan as my goal, I descended from Ferghanah province to Ilak Yaylagh, a summer pasturage of Hisar province."[173] By his estimate he had between two to three hundred men," great and small who placed their hope in him," about the same number of loyal adherents as during his first *qazaqlïq* days in 1498, although only a few of Bābur's original *beg*s or warriors from 1494 had survived. His men had little if any armor and few horses or weapons. They were "mostly on foot, holding staves, wearing poor boots and rough cloaks."[174] Bābur and his entourage were reduced to a miserable state similar to but even worse than what they had experienced after their flight from Samarqand two years earlier. Now in 1504 "conditions were so desperate that we had [but] two tents among us. My [main] tent (*chādar-im*) was assigned to my mother [while] at each camp I sat in a small Turcoman tent (*alajaq)*."[175] Yet as Bābur moved south through Hisar with this ragged band he began to receive encouraging reports that the forces of Khusrau Shāh, the Tīmūrids' nemesis, were beginning to disintegrate in the face of Uzbek raids and the threat of a full-scale Uzbek assault on Badakhshan. Bābur reports that even though he had originally intended to go to Khurasan, now something "was hoped for from this province and Khusrau Shāh's retainers [since] every few days a person would come from the province, the people and the Mongols with hopeful words."[176] As he approached the Oxus he received a message that Bāqī Chaghāniānī, Khusrau Shāh's younger brother, pledged his good will and offered to join him.[177]

After Bābur crossed the Oxus Bāqī Chaghāniānī rode to meet Bābur, accompanying him as he marched south. Bābur is careful to describe his relations with Khusrau Shāh's younger brother as an

[173] BN-M, f. 120a. Citing Soviet archeological expeditions to this area, Azimdzhanova mentions that in the 1950's Tajik Academy of Sciences researchers who were studying Hisar were shown "old swords, chain armor, glass beads and money with Bābur's name." However, she doesn't date this material, which Bābur could also have left there in 1512, following his last defeat by the Uzbeks and his third and final loss of Samarqand. Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii*, 51 and n. 11.

[174] BN-M, f. 120a.

[175] Ibid., f. 120a.

[176] BN-M, f. 120a.

[177] BN-M, f. 120b.

alliance rather than one of fealty, and as they jointly moved south towards Bamian, west-northwest of Kabul, it is clear why he chooses his words so carefully. Bābur complains that although Bāqī Chaghāniānī exercised great authority in their combined entourage he refused to offer Bābur and his impoverished, hungry men even one of his huge flock of thirty or forty thousand sheep until they were half way to Kabul, when he finally gave fifty sheep. Not surprisingly Bābur describes him in with a characteristic string of epithets he uses for people he disliked as "avaricious, miserly, spiteful, bad natured, malevolent, ill-tempered person," restraining himself only to the extent he refers to Bāqī Chaghāniānī as a *kishi*, a person, rather than as a *mardak*.[178] Nonetheless, Bābur must have needed him badly, because he later appointed him governor of Kabul and Lord of the Gate, positions in which he controlled all the commercial taxes of the city. Also joining Bābur at this time was one of his other least favorite but influential *beg*s, Qambar ʿAlī Mughul, so recently with Tambal and then Khusrau Shāh. He now returned to Bābur as unceremoniously as he had left, but was shortly afterwards sent packing because, Bābur not surprisingly remarks, he was not trusted. Another of Bābur's former men who had abandon him, evidently for Khusrau Shāh, during the last *fatrat*, the interregnum, also returned and announced that Khusrau Shāh's Mongol troops had shifted their allegiance to Bābur.

These Mongols evidently sensed that Khusrau Shāh was incapable of resisting Shībānī Khan, and so began deserting him just as in the past other Mongol contingents had abandoned Bābur. Their willingness to shift their allegiance to someone who was nothing more than a refugee, one who commanded or, more accurately, led no more than a few ill-clothed and poorly equipped men, one who neither controlled territory nor had an immediate prospect of military success, dramatically demonstrated the life-saving power of legitimacy. Apart from some undefined and unrecorded aspect in his personality that might have drawn men to him in his desperate state, Bābur's only apparent lure for these defecting troops was his Tīmūrid identity. He was young, spectacularly unsuccessful and almost defenseless, yet a short time later thousands of Mongols abandoned Khusrau Shāh and joined his service. Given this demonstration of the Mongols' quixotic loyalties and his own earlier

[178] BN-M, f. 59a.

experience at Samarqand, Bābur can hardly have been surprised when, several years later, many of these same Mongol troops turned against him.

The final reversal of the fortunes of Khusrau Shāh and Bābur was now ironically prefaced by the celebration of a wedding in the small fortress of Ajar. Bābur's brother Jahāngīr married a daughter of Sultān Masʿūd Mīrzā, Bābur's former ally before Samarqand, the romantic but now also tragic figure who had been blinded by Khusrau Shāh. After this brief pause Bābur and Bāqī Chaghāniānī moved quickly south into the mountains as they learned that Shībānī Khan had occupied Andijan and had turned his army towards Hisar and the Oxus. Shībānī's immediate goal was probably Khusrau Shāh's important town of Qunduz, just south of the upper Oxus. Unwilling to defend Qunduz, Khusrau Shāh fled towards Kabul. His commandant in Qunduz, with what can only be regarded as great good sense, declared for Shībānī Khan, while 3-4,000 Mongol households from Hisar and Qunduz joined other Mongols who had already declared for Bābur.

Khusrau Shāh himself, who had blinded one Tīmūrid, assassinated another and insolently offended Bābur by ignoring him earlier in his career, now saw his power evaporate in a few weeks. By the end of August this man who had previously commanded twenty-thirty thousand troops outfitted in splendid livery, this man who had "neither birth, nor lineage nor honor nor worth nor prudence nor bravery," this man who, therefore, utterly lacked legitimacy, yet one whom Bābur scornfully remembered for nearly having the Friday prayers read in his name, that is for his arrogance in all but declaring sovereignty in a Tīmūrid and Chingīzid world, this little man now had to beg Bābur, his brothers and their ragtag band for mercy.[179]

Bābur recalls with unfeigned delight Khusrau Shāh's humiliation as they met on the banks of the Andarab river, near its confluence with Surkhab, north of Kabul.

> In the middle of the month of Rabīʿ al-awwal after crossing the Andarab river with a small troop in the vicinity of Dushi I sat down under a large plane tree. Khusrau Shāh came with a large, splendid

[179] For Bābur's recitation of Khusrau Shāh's faults that made him an illegitimate ruler see BN-M, f. 68a.

> retinue. According to custom and etiquette he dismounted at a distance. At the interview he knelt three times
>
> He did so three more times when he withdrew. As he made [polite] enquiries and offered gifts he knelt once again. He did exactly the same with Jahāngīr Mīrzā and Mīrzā Khan. This old, fat little man (*mardak*) who for so many years did exactly as he pleased, who stopped short of [declaring] sovereignty only by not having his own name read in the *khutbah*, had knelt twenty-five or twenty-six times. [Now] becoming sick with coming and going he nearly collapsed. His many years of command and rule were utterly lost.[180]

Khusrau Shāh then made two "strange comments" to Bābur, one of which perfectly summed up the ruthlessly pragmatic allegiances of the period. He told Bābur that his *naukarlar*, his retainers, had left him four times before and had returned. Then almost on cue, at least as Bābur dramatically describes the scene, "Great and small, good and bad, *beg*s and their retainers, group by group with their families and herds began coming from them to us. Between the midday and evening prayer the next day not one of those people remained in his [Khusrau Shāh's] presence."[181] Twenty to thirty thousand men changed sides in one day. Even Bābur, who rarely invokes divine intervention to explain events, might be excused in this instance for quoting the Quran on God's omnipotence, exclaiming afterwards, "How wonderful is his power!" How wonderful, that "without a battle or a skirmish in the presence of two hundred or two hundred and forty wretched, impoverished men such as ourselves [Khusrau Shāh] became so contemptible, weak, helpless and exhausted that he no longer controlled his retainers, his property or his life!"[182] Khusrau Shāh was, however, allowed to leave for Khurasan with his family, gold and jewels; Bāqī Chaghāniānī had negotiated his older brother's safety earlier when he joined Bābur at the Oxus. Nonetheless, as his "strange" comment to Bābur suggested he might, Khusrau Shāh subsequently had one last fling at power. Sometime later he gathered a small force and tried once more for Qunduz, where he was captured by Uzbek forces, executed and his head sent on to Shībānī Khan.[183]

It was Bāqī Chaghāniānī also who convinced Bābur to move on

[180] BN-M, f. 123b. The Uzbeks raided Dushi just after Bābur left. f. 124b.
[181] BN-M, f. 124a.
[182] BN-M, f. 124b.
[183] BN-M, fs. 155a-156b.

Kabul rather than following an ill-defined plan to march toward Khurasan. Until his death in 1502 Bābur's Mīrānshāhī uncle, Ulugh Beg Mīrzā Kābulī, had controlled the easternmost Tīmūrid outpost of Kabul. Afterwards various *beg*s pushed his son aside and one of them, Muqīm Arghun, nominally controlled the city in this fall of 1504. After his astonishing turn of fortune on the banks of the Andarāb Bābur immediately began moving south towards Kabul, strengthened by the diffuse but substantial contingents of Khusrau Shāh's Mongols and now better prepared for battle with 7-800 coats of mail and helmets. Otherwise, Bābur reports, he inherited only some porcelain china from Khusrau Shāh. Harassed by Uzbek raiders who arrived at the Andarab the day after he and his men decamped, Bābur sent a small force back to attack them while he hurried toward Kabul. More of Khusrau Shāh's men, mainly Mongols, joined Bābur with their families. These groups probably represented what the Castilian ambassador to Tīmūr, Clavijo, had seen of his people/armies in 1405.

> When Tīmūr calls his people to war all assemble and march with him, surrounded by their flocks and herds, thus carrying along their possessions with them, in company with their wives and children. These last follow the host, and in the lands which they invade their flocks, namely and particularly the sheep, camels and horses, serve to ration the horde.[184]

By this time Bābur's large, disparate group of men and nomad households must have resembled a sprawling refugee column as much as an army. He himself remarks that Khusrau Shāh's men, "Oppressive and undisciplined," began terrorizing local inhabitants. Bābur had a man clubbed for stealing a pot of oil and the man died. "All the people," he remarks, "were cowed by this public punishment."[185]

With his mother and her entourage joining him again after another perilous journey through the Afghān mountains, Bābur and his brothers—Jahāngīr Mīrzā nominally commanding the right flank and Nāsir Mīrzā the left—decided to besiege Kabul. Meanwhile they negotiated directly with Muqīm Arghun. After Bābur made a display of strength immediately before Kabul's Charmgarar gate near the Kabul river, Muqīm agreed to transfer his *beg*s to

[184] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-06*, 191.
[185] BN-M, f. 126a.

Bābur's service and turn over Kabul in exchange for his life, property and continued service of his closest *naukarlar*. Muqīm was offered land near Pamghan, north-northwest of Kabul, but eventually chose instead to leave for Qandahar, where his father and brother held the city and its productive agricultural lands for Husayn Bayqara in Harat.

As the transfer of power was being discussed social order dissolved inside the city walls; "disturbances and attacks," perhaps looting and killing, broke out while Bābur was still camped outside. Finally, as he describes the scene in his usual laconic style: "I myself rode off, had four or five people shot with arrows and one or two cut to pieces. The tumult ceased."[186] Now master of Kabul Bābur began to rebuild his political fortunes. While initially he was preoccupied with Uzbek threats amidst his own clear intention to restore a Tīmūrid empire in Mawarannahr, he was ultimately forced by the geographic logic of his situation and the strength of the Uzbek confederation gradually to reorient himself to India. The change came slowly, however, and Bābur did not finally decide to attack eastwards into Hindustan until well after he failed in his third and last attempt to conquer and hold Samarqand seven years later.

[186] BN-M, fs. 127b-128a.

CHAPTER THREE

BĀBUR'S CULTURAL PERSONALITY

خان را موغولی غول صورتی می شنیدیم و خیال میکردیم که مغولی باشد که
وضع و اطوار او مثل سایر اتراک صحرایی.
اما چون خانرا دیدیم ، مردی خوش محاوره و خوش تکلم و
بتواضع و بافضیلت بوده اند

*

I heard that [Yūnas] Khan had a demon-like Mongol face, and I imagined him to be a Mongol with the disposition and manners of other Turks of the steppe. But when I saw the Khan he was a well-spoken, courteous and well-educated man.

Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār on Bābur's maternal grandfather, the Mongol, Yūnas Khan.[1]

When against all odds Bābur marched unopposed into Kabul in 1504 in his twenty-second year, he began a second phase of his life that eventually led to the occupation of Delhi and Agra just over twenty years later. The nature of the state that he founded directly reflected what might be called his cultural personality, his learned behavior, that is his social assumptions, political and cultural values and even his aesthetic standards. In contrast to the relatively meagre insights he provides into his emotional life and his personal relations with family and friends, he exhibits his cultural personality to a degree that is rare in autobiographical works of this or earlier periods. Sometimes explicitly but more often implicitly he reveals the values that determined his policies as a Tīmūrid ruler. No other Asian or European author before Rousseau provides such a wealth of insights into the cultural biases that influenced his life. No other founder of an early modern empire makes so clear the fundamental principles of his state, in this case the Tīmūrid-Mughul Empire of South Asia.

[1] TR-T, f. 34b.

In Bābur's case the outlines of his cultural inheritance are suggested by the accounts of his grandfather, the Mongol Yūnas Khan. In his semi-autobiographical history of the Mongols Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat discusses the Khan at length. He reports that those who had met him, such as Bābur's Naqshbandī *shaykh*, Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār, while expecting to find a rough-hewn Mongol, discovered instead a cultured man who did not even physically resemble the typical Turco-Mongol of the steppe. As one who had spent years of exile in Iran, Yūnas Khan had returned to Mawarannahr with the polish of a Perso-Islamic courtier wedded to the military skills of a steppe aristocrat. Unlike most of his erstwhile Mongol followers he also "loved" cities. Bābur and his Tīmūrid cousins were two more generations down the social and cultural evolutionary path to Perso-Islamic sedentary society. They still possessed some traits of the Turco-Mongol military aristocracy, but otherwise they represented a sedentarized, Persianized aristocratic class who personified a civilized ideal that was in most ways indistinguishable from cultures throughout the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world.

The Tīmūrid Inheritance

Bābur's cultural personality embodied the Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic culture that was shared to varying degrees by Tīmūrid and Chingīzid lineages and members of the warrior aristocracy of Mawarannahr, Mughulistan and Khurasan in the late fifteenth century. The pairing of Turco-Mongol with Perso-Islamic conveys a general idea of the hybrid culture of this region's ruling elite, where Islamized Turco-Mongols with their pastoral nomadic and military traditions ruled over and were influenced by Muslim Iranian or Iranized sedentary populations. Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic culture had evolved in these Tīmūrid lands of Mawarannahr and northeastern Iran over half a millennium.[2] In some

[2] For general historical background see Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), K. Z. Ashrafyan, "Central Asia Under Timur from 1370- to the early fifteenth century," in M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth ed., *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), IV, I, 319-45, and R. G. Mukminova, "The Timurid States in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries," in Asimov and Bosworth ed., *History of the Civilizations of*

limited linguistic and literary ways Iranian and Turkic interaction dated to pre-Islamic contacts on Iran's northeastern frontier, but the characteristic traits of Bābur's day began to be formed in the late tenth century when the Muslim Qarakhanid Turks established themselves in Bukhara and Samarqand with their predominantly Iranian or Iranized Muslim inhabitants. Simultaneously a branch of Oghuz Turks, the Saljuqs, themselves Muslims to varying degrees, forced their ways into Khurasan.[3] In 1040 with wide-eyed amazement of the truly rustic Turkic pastoralists they occupied the Perso-Islamic cultural center of Nishapur. Then Chingīz Khan and subsequently Tīmūr, himself a Muslim, imposed their rule, followers and customs on the entire region.

In the case of the Muslim Turks who both preceded and followed the heathen Mongols, as well as the Muslim and non-Muslim Turks who constituted a major proportion of Mongol armies, their populations far exceeded the relatively small numbers of Mongol troops and camp followers who entered Mawarannahr, Iran and Afghanistan.[4] The relatively small number of Mongols who remained behind in the region is at least partly indicated by the fact that in the twentieth century only in Afghanistan is there a distinct population of ethnic Mongols.[5] The predominantly Turkic invaders and

Central Asia, 347-63, for introductions to the history of Mawarannahr or Transoxiana and the period of Tīmūr and his Tīmūrid successors. For the immediate Turco-Mongol background see Manz, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, 1-18.

[3] For a lucid summary of this period and a brief discussion of Islamization see Peter B. Golden, "The Karakhanids and Early Islam," in Denis Sinor ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) , 343-370. Clifford Edmund Bosworth discusses the Oghuz/Saljuq movement into Khurasan in *The Ghaznavids, Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran* 994-1040 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), Chapters 7 & 9.

[4] See Golden, "The Turkic Peoples Under the Çinggisids" in Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, 291-95.

[5] These are not the Hazārahs, who are now believed to be a predominantly Iranian people, some of whom intermarried with Turco-Mongol conquerors and absorbed their vocabulary to a very limited degree. The only ethnic group in twentieth century Afghanistan who call themselves Mongōl was, in the mid-twentieth century, primarily located in the Ghurat region within the province of Harat in western Afghanistan. See H. F. Schurmann, *The Mongols of Afghanistan* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1962), especially pp. 159-217. Bābur mentions that in his day some Hazārahs and "Nikdīrī" in the "western mountains" spoke the Mughul language. BN-M, f. 131b. He also mentions Mughul as one of the languages spoken in Kabul.

migrants who overwhelmed the Iranian inhabitants of Transoxiana also succeeded in imposing their languages and dialects throughout Mawarannahr and even the areas in Mughulistan to the north and east inhabited by nomadic or semi-nomadic Mongols. Turkī was the most commonly spoken tongue in both Tīmūrid lands and Mughulistan, although Persian retained its literary supremacy throughout Iran, Mawarannahr and Afghanistan.

The general nature of the Tīmūrids' Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic inheritance can be seen both in Tīmūr's policies and even more so in those of his descendants. These were the men who ruled Mawarannahr and Khurasan during the Tīmūrid century from Tīmūr's death in 1405 until Sultan Husayn Bāyqarā's death in Harat in 1506. They were Turks and Mongols who lived largely sedentary lives in Samarqand, Harat and nearby cities, speaking both Turkī and Persian and participating to varying degrees in Perso-Islamic artistic and scientific culture. Tīmūr conquered Mawarannahr and much of the eastern Islamic world with nomadic and semi-nomadic Mongol and Turkic warriors, and Turco-Mongol commanders composed the inner circle of Tīmūrid advisors and courtiers throughout the entire century. Yet while Tīmūr began life as a pastoral nomadic tribesman he helped to ensure his descendants would become firmly rooted in the sophisticated Perso-Islamic urban culture of Khurasan and Mawarannahr.

Rather than scorning cities in the manner of Chingīz Khan and many Central Asian Mongols, Tīmūr built a monumental capital at Samarqand, using artisans he kidnapped from the great urban centers of Isfahan, Baghdad, Damascus and Delhi, and named suburbs of his capital after these great cities of the Islamic world. His conscious evocation of Muslim urban centers in Samarqand is unmistakable evidence of his own self-image, the ruler of a new and unsurpassed, urban-based Islamic empire. Whatever Tīmūr's own knowledge of and attitude toward Islam and Islamic history, and both Hāfiz-i Ābrū and Ibn Khaldūn, who meet Tīmūr in Damascus in 1401, indicate that it was quite sophisticated, he erected monumental Islamic architecture and especially patronized the shrine of the sufi, Shaykh Ahmad Yasāvī, near Tashkent.[6] He also

[6] For an impression of Tīmūr's considerable knowledge of Islam and Middle Eastern history see V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, II, *Ulugh-Beg*, T. Minorsky trans. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 22-23. Regarding Ibn

ostentatiously played chess with Sayyids, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad; at least he did so when residing in Samarqand in 1405 at age seventy.[7] Appearing publicly with these men was probably meant to advertise his faith, or at least his formal commitment to Islam. He often learned about Islam and its history from recitations of Persian histories; no comparable Turkī religious and historical literature existed. Tīmūr also commissioned illustrated manuscripts of both old and new historical works, nearly all of them in Persian.[8] Persian was then what it remained for later Tīmūrids, the language that gave Turco-Mongols entry into the Perso-Islamic civilization of Mawarannahr and the Iranian plateau.

Elements of Perso-Islamic and Turco-Mongol culture can also be detected in the policies of Shāh Rukh and his son, Ulugh Beg, the rulers, respectively, of Harat and Samarqand during first half of the fifteenth century. Their policies give some general idea of how these cultural influences could be present in varying combinations in the personalities of different individuals from the same background. Both Tīmūrids were urban Muslims, Turks who also spoke Persian. Both patronized Islam and Perso-Islamic literary and artistic culture, presiding over the construction of Islamic architectural monuments and the production of illustrated Persian manuscripts. Both men also sponsored historical texts that illustrated their Turco-Mongol heritage. Yet there were also significant contrasts in their policies as rulers of Harat and Samarqand.

Historians often place Shāh Rukh and Ulugh Beg at the extreme ends of an ideological spectrum, with the father personifying the aggressively Islamizing sultan and his son publicly adhering to Turco-Mongol traditions. While this dichotomy, like most such stark distinctions, is overdrawn, these men did exhibit distinct cultural personalities. Their attitudes may have had something to do with their respective residences in Harat and Samarqand, the first located in one of the ancient centers of Iranian culture and the second bordering the steppe with its greater Turco-Mongol population. Whether their contrasting environments influenced their

Khaldūn's comments in particular, see Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus*, A.D. 1401 (803 A.H.), 31 and 72, n. 58.

[7] As testified to by Ruy de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 235.

[8] Tīmūrid material culture is ably and beautifully depicted in the volume by Lentz and Lowrey, *Timur and the Princely Vision*.

policies is difficult to assess without knowing more about their personalities. However, Shāh Rukh did legitimize his rule with Islam. Thus he used the Arabic/Islamic title of sultan, and publicly emphasized his adherence to Islamic law, the *sharīʿah*. He sponsored a revival of orthodox Sunni learning and ostentatiously enforced "Muslim" morality in the streets.[9] He also stressed the superiority of Muslim law to the *yasa*, the customary law of the Mongols. Indeed in his religious policies Shāh Rukh seems consciously to have modeled himself on Ghazān Khan, the first Mongol ruler of Iran to convert to Islam.[10]

Ulugh Beg also exhibited a commitment to Islam, but one expressed more in intellectual and institutional rather than moral or ideological terms. He constructed *madrasah*s in Bukhara and Samarqand, as well as a sufi *khānagāh* and a mosque in Samarqand, although it is worth noting that one of the Samarqand *madrasah*s was a center of mathematical and scientific instruction.[11] Yet in contrast to his father he also invoked Turco-Mongol traditions to bolster his legitimacy by taking for himself Tīmūr's title of *kürgen*. Unlike his father he also publicly exhibited his ties to Chingīzid *khan*s, by keeping them confined in a splendid garden in Samarqand.[12] Ulugh Beg also ruled over a much gayer city in Samarqand, where "there were carousals with music and singing. Wealthy inhabitants of other cities even had musicians of both sexes come from Samarqand."[13] Certain Samarqand *ʿalīms* even publicly defended these entertainments.[14] Ulugh Beg's decision to make Samarqand a center of astronomical and mathematical research may

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[9] Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Mongol History rewritten and relived," *Mythes historiques du monde musulman* (*Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerannée*), 2001, 144. See also Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in Light of the Sunni Revival under Shah Rukh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.2 (1995), 210-236. The authors discuss the curriculum of the Shah Rukh's madrasah and also mention the important combination of Sunnism and sufism among the *ʿulamā* of the Timurid period.

[10] Beatrice Manz makes this important and revealing point. "Mongol history rewritten and relived," 143-45.

[11] Aydın Sayılı, *Uluğ Bey Semrkanddeki Ilim Faaliyeti Hakkında Giyasüdin-i Kāsī'nin Mektubu* Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlardın 7, 39 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1960), 40.

[12] Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, II, *Ulug-Beg*, 85.

[13] H.R. Roemer, "The Successors of Tīmūr," in CHR 6, 110.

[14] Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, II, *Ulugh-Beg*, 114.

also have been influenced by his less censorious or ideological form of Islam and greater inclination towards his Turco-Mongol roots. Whatever the reasons his lavish patronage and interest in these fields certainly distinguished him from his father, whose cultural policies were focused on religion and literary/artistic production.

Ulugh Beg's patronage for and personal interest in astronomy and mathematics might have been inspired by scientists whom Tīmūr brought to Samarqand or by a childhood visit to the famous Mongol observatory at Maraghah.[15] The city may already have been a minor center for astronomical scholarship when he came to power.[16] However, the model for astronomical research in this period was indeed the Maraghah observatory in Iran that he had seen years earlier. Ghazān Khan himself had visited this observatory in 1300. Mongols, even converts to Islam such Ghazān Khan, were far more sympathetic to the secular sciences than pious, conservative Muslims.[17] They had none of the doctrinaire religious objections to scientific and astronomical work that members of the *ʿulamā* often expressed. The ironic possibility exists, therefore, that while Shāh Rukh may have been influenced by Ghazān Khān's religious policies, Ulugh Beg's astronomical studies may have echoed the Mongol leader's practical scientific interests. In any event Ulugh Beg is known to have been taught by such major philosophical/scientific figures as Qādī-zāda Rūmī and Jamshīd ibn Masʿūd.[18] And not only did he take a direct interest in mathematical and scientific research, but had the observatory built whose scholars produced the revised astronomical tables that the Tīmūrid historian

[15] Sayılı, *Uluğ Bey...*, 39. For an introduction to Ulugh Beg's scientific interests and astronomy in the Islamic world see Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, II, *Ulugh-Beg*, 129-34, Lentz and Lowrey, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 144-53, Ahmad Dallal, "Science, Medicine and Technology," in John Esposito ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 161-83 and D. Pingree, "ʿIlm al-Hayʾa," EI2, 3, 135-38. It is important to note that Tīmūrid astronomical knowledge was transmitted to Tīmūrid-Mughul South Asia, but except for astrological calculations it was used not by the Tīmūrid-Mughul emperors themselves, but the Rajput ruler Jai Singh. See G. R. Kaye, "The Astronomical Observatories of Jai Singh," *Archeological Survey of India*, New Imperial Series, XV (Calcutta, 1918).

[16] Ibid., Sayılı, *Uluğ Bey*, 39.

[17] Thomas Allsen discusses Maraghah and Mongol interest in astronomy. *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 161-75.

[18] Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, II, *Ulugh-Beg*, 130, and in greater detail in Sayılı, *Uluğ Bey...*, 33-53.

Daulatshāh saw as a completion of Ptolomey's astronomical work, *The Alamgest.*[19] Indeed, "in the 1420s and 1430s Samarqand was the astronomical and mathematical capital of the world."[20] Daulatshāh's assertion that Ulugh Beg was the wisest and most learned king since Alexander, the student of Aristotle, cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric when his scientific achievements are taken into account.[21]

Bābur: The Social Milieu

Bābur was heir to the Tīmūrid traditions exhibited in different ways by the policies of Shāh Rukh and Ulugh Beg. However, due to his literary legacy the Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic strands of his cultural personality stand out in more distinct relief than for any other individual in the history of Mongol and Turkic rule in Central Asia and Iran. Whatever else is uncertain about the use of his autobiography as a source for judging political events, there is little doubt about its usefulness as a guide to his Tīmūrid mentalité. The obvious introduction to these elements in his own heritage is his description of his father, ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā.

Bābur spent his earliest years with his father and mother in Akhsi, before moving at an unspecified age with his *beg atekeh* to Andijan. Like most late fifteenth-century Tīmūrid rulers Bābur's father lived a largely urban life, which meant for him as for Tīmūr himself when not on campaign, a life outside houses in kiosks and garden pavilions. ʿUmar Shaykh's life was largely sedentary too, with the exception of occasional raids and attacks, and based upon Bābur's testimony neither his father nor any of his father's brothers

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[19] Lentz and Lowrey, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 97. Ptolemy's *Alamgest* is discussed at length and with scholarly precision by several contributors to the volume edited by J. B. Harley and David Woodward, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Sciences* 5, 2 Book I *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[20] Kevin Krisciunas "The Legacy of Ulugh Beg," quoted by Edward S. Kennedy, *Astronomy and Astrology in the Medieval Islamic World* (Aldershot, Gt. Britain: Variorum, 1998), XI, 11.

[21] Two valuable studies of astronomical and mathematical scholarship in Samarqand during Ulugh Beg's reign are are by T. N. Kary-Niyazov, *Astronomicheskaya Shkola Ulugbeka* (Moskva: Akademii Nauk, 1950) and S. Kh. Sirazhdinov ed., *Iz Istorii Nauki Epokhi Ulugbeka* (Tashkent, "Fan," 1979).

spent much time campaigning. ʿUmar Shaykh resided principally in Akhsi, the largest town in the Ferghanah valley, but still an extremely modest settlement when compared with Samarqand, Bukhara or Harat. As Bābur remembered him, his father, who died in his eldest son's twelfth year, was an unpretentious man "who dressed and ate without ceremony (*bitakalluf*)."[22]

By describing ʿUmar Shaykh as unceremonious Bābur probably accurately depicted a Tīmūrid who lived modestly on limited resources, presiding over a simple court in the bucolic Ferghanah valley. ʿUmar Shaykh was not an imperious figure; few late fifteenth century Tīmūrids were. His lack of pretension may have inclined Bābur to the comradely informality he almost ostentatiously observed as he fought for survival in Mawarannahr and later for a Tīmūrid empire in Kabul and India. Bābur probably meant to praise his father when he used *bitakalluf*, for elsewhere in his memoir he uses the word approvingly to describe men who did not too rigidly observe Tīmūrid or Chingīzid social or political etiquette, or to compliment unpretentious scholars, such as ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Lārī, the disciple of the great fifteenth-century Harat poet, Jāmī.[23] Bābur prized unaffected behavior, but within limits. In one passage he uses the term pejoratively, when he mildly criticizes his young Mongol uncle, Kichik Khan, whose tent, when Bābur met him, was a disheveled mess.[24]

His father retained the military skills and social habits of the Turco-Mongol military class, but like other late fifteenth-century Tīmūrids, combined these traits in varying measures with the observance of Islam and the mastery of social skills and literary knowledge of a cultured Perso-Islamic ruler. He was, his son asserts, "brave and manly" (*shujaʿ o mardānah*), a good swordsman, if only an "average archer," but good with his fists.[25] Like many members of his class—including Bābur himself later in life—ʿUmar Shaykh was "a great drinker," also fond of the intoxicating confection, *maʿjūn* and good company at the drinking parties he held once or twice a week, where he often recited poetry. He constantly played backgammon and sometimes gambled.

[22] BN-M, f. 7a.
[23] BN-M, f. 178b.
[24] BN-M, f. 108b.
[25] BN-M, f. 7b.

Alcoholic drinking rituals were a common feature of pre-Islamic Iranian aristocratic society, as well as at such ethnically Turkic but culturally Perso-Islamic courts as the Ghaznavids.[26] However, the obvious precursor for ʿUmar Shaykh's sessions were those of Tīmīr himself. As described by the Castilian ambassador, Clavijo:

> It is the custom of the Tartars to drink their wine before eating, and they are wont to partake of it then so copiously and quaffing it at such frequent intervals that the men soon get very drunk. No feast we were told is considered a real festival unless the guests have drunk themselves sot....the man who drinks very freely and can swallow the most wine is by them called a Bahādur, which is a title and means one who is a valiant drinker.[27]

As Clavijo's account suggests drinking was done in public, and so too in late Tīmūrid times. So also in the ancient Near East where "the drinking of alcohol was not a solitary activity but a highly social event."[28] Nowhere is this made more clear than when Bābur describes the time in Harat in December 1506 when he decided to abandon Islamic abstinence. In an almost comic description he relates how he was not able to drink because the social conditions were never quite right. At no time, apparently, did he think of first trying a drink by himself. Not until five or six years later did he begin drinking. After that he replicated the drinking culture of his father and repeatedly describes the convivial, informal and often wildly unrestrained dinners, drinking and poetry sessions with his *begs* that he recalled with great affection. While he sometimes spoke critically of gatherings where drinking degenerated into lewd, uncontrollable behavior, later in the caste-divided society of India he describes these occasions as the civilized Tīmūrid social ideal.

Bābur seems dispassionately honest about his father's military skills, but affectionate when he describes his social habits, which also included ʿUmar Shaykh's "amorous temperament," marked by "lovers marks and brands" (*naʿl u daghī).* He certainly approved his father's commitment to orthodox Sunnī Islam, remarking that he

[26] See William L. Hanaway, "Blood and Wine: Sacrifice and Celebration in Manūchiri's Wine Poetry," *Iran* 26 (1988), 69-80.

[27] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 231.

[28] P. Michalowski, "The Drinking Gods: Alcohol in Mesopotamia," in Lucio Milano ed., *Drinking in Ancient Societies, History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (Padua, Italy: Sargon srl, 1994), 29.

was "in manners a morals a Hanafī Muslim of pure faith,"[29] a man who never neglected the five daily prayers and frequently recited the Quran. Like Bābur he was also a *murīd* of the most important Naqshbandī *shaykh* in late fifteenth century Mawarannahr, Khwājah ʿUbaydullah Ahrār. Bābur also admired ʿUmar Shaykh's education and verbal polish, describing him as learned (*rawān sawādī*), eloquent (*fasīh)* and sweet-speaking (*shīrīn zabān*), all Perso-Arabic, Arabic or Persian adjectives for the knowledge and conversation of a urbane Iranized aristocrat. By describing his father as learned Bābur may have in mind particularly ʿUmar Shaykh's knowledge of four "classical" Persian poets, Nizāmī (1140-c.1202), Amīr Khusrau (1253-1325), Rūmī (1207-40), and Firdausī (d. 1025/26), author of the Iranian royal epic, the *Shāh nāmah.*

ʿUmar Shaykh was also "just," doubtless an attribute of idealized pre-Islamic and non-Islamic rulers, but expressed by Bābur as ʿ*adālat*, in Arabic/Islamic terms. Bābur's use of ʿ*adālat* was not fortuitous but reflected a basic distinction ʿUmar Shaykh himself made between his Turco-Mongol social and military life and his perception of himself as a Muslim ruler. Bābur records one of his most telling observations about ʿUmar Shaykh's compartmentalized sense of these identities when he discusses his father's headgear, clothing of great symbolic importance in this as in other societies. It was exemplified in the twentieth century by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's insistence that "modern" Turks had to substitute the brimmed European hat for the Ottoman fez in republican Turkey. According to Bābur, ʿUmar Shaykh sometimes wore a turban and at the other times the *börk*, the Mongol cap worn by his Chaghatay relatives in Mughulistan.[30] "He wound his turban twisted," Bābur remembers, "In those days all turbans were *dastarpīch* or four-twists [and] the turban sash hung down. When it was hot he wore the Mongol cap (*börk*), except when he held court."[31] ʿUmar Shaykh's choice of headgear symbolizes the selective observance of Islamic and steppe norms among the late Tīmūrid ruling class. Muslims

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[29] BN-M, f. 7b.

[30] BN-M, f. 103a, where Bābur refers to the headdress of his maternal uncle, the Mongol Kichik Khān, and his men as "Mughulcheh börklar."

[31] BN-M, f. 7a. For photographs and brief descriptions of various Central Asian and Iranian caps and turbans see Sigrid Westphal-Hellbusch and Gisela Soltkahn, *Mützen aus Zentralasien und Persien* (Berlin: Museum für Völkerkunde, 1976).

wore turbans and by the late fifteenth century many Turco-Mongol Muslim rulers who might relax with the familiar Mongol cap would not use it to preside at court, where justice, if not sovereignty, was administered according to Islamic norms.

Bābur must have been aware as any Central Asian Muslim of his day that the turban identified Muslims. Apart from observing his father and other Turco-Mongols, later in life he read al-Jūzjānī's anti-Mongol history, *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī* in which Jūzjānī relates a story about an encounter between some Arab Muslim merchants and Chingīz Khan.

> Among the merchants they found a few persons from the west, ʿArabian Musalmāns, turban-wearers, and they were sent for; and to the person who was the chief, and most intelligent among the party, Chingīz Khan related his dream. The *Tāzī* [Arabic]-speaking merchant said: 'The turban is the crown and diadem of the ʿArab, for head dresses of that description are the tiaras of the ʿArabs; and the Prophet of the Musalmāns—Muhammad the Chosen One—the blessing of God be upon him!—was a turban-wearer, and the Khalifahs of Islam are turban wearers.[32]

Bābur may also have heard stories, such as that told by Haydar Mīrzā, about the significance of turbans in the partially Islamized world of early fifteenth century Mughulistan, illustrating how seriously newly converted Muslim rulers viewed the headgear worn by their followers. In the history of his Mongol ancestors, the *Ta'rīkh-i Rashīdī,* Haydar Mīrzā tells a story about Muhammad Khan, whom he describes as the last of the Mongol *khaqans*. Muhammad Khan was, he writes, a sincere Muslim and a just man (*ʿadālat u dād*) who brought most of the Mongol "nation"(*ulus)* into Islam during his reign. One of the "severe" measures Muhammad Khan took to force Mongols to adopt Islam, Haydar Mīrzā reports, was to punish them for refusing to substitute the turban for the Mongol cap, tantamount to denying Islam. If one of his Mongols refused to wear a turban, the Khan ordered a horseshoe nail to be driven into the man's head.[33]

Bābur also remarks on the selective use of headgear by Sultān

[32] Abū ʿUmar Mīnhāj-ud-Dīn Usmān ibn Sirāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī *Tabakāt-i nāsirī* H.G. Raverty trans. (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, repr. 1970), II, 974-75.

[33] TR-T, f. 20b.

Husayn Mīrzā Bāyqarā. According to Bābur, Husayn Bāyqarā "wore either a *börk* or a *qalpagh* [Turkoman hat]. Occasionally on religious days he put on a small, three-fold-turban, wound broadly and badly [and] thrusting a heron's feather into it, would go to prayers."[34] The sense that late fifteenth century and early sixteenth-century Harat still retained a distinct Turco-Mongol atmosphere is corroborated by Bihzād's paintings of Husayn Bāyqarā's court, where he and many courtiers are pictured wearing these caps.[35] In contrast court scenes from late sixteenth-century Safavid Iran and Mughul India nearly always depict entirely turbaned gatherings. Bābur, in fact, implicitly locates Husayn Bāyqarā on the Turco-Mongol side of the Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic cultural spectrum. Not only did he fail to observe Muslim fasts,[36] but he looked and acted more like a Turk than ʿUmar Shaykh. He was "slant-eyed" (*qiyik gözlüq*) and composed Turkī poetry, and he wore fine red and green silk clothes reminiscent of Mongols who, like Bābur's uncle Kichik Khan, dressed for ceremonial occasions in Chinese brocades.[37] These outward signs of persistent Central Asian cultural strains are consistent with Husayn Bāyqarā's interest in Turkī, which was elevated to a literary language by his boon companion, Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī.

Yet Husayn Bāyqarā was hardly a Turkic cultural chauvinist; he presided over a florescence of Turkī, Persian and Islamic culture in Harat. Bābur's description of writers, artists and scholars at Husayn Bāyqarā's court reminds readers that the high culture of the city was overwhelmingly Perso-Islamic, as indeed it was at ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā's court, although to a much more modest degree. In Harat Persian literature and Iranian arts predominated; Muslim theologians and sufis flocked to the richly endowed mosques and religious colleges. Jāmī the last great Persian classical poet and influential Naqshbandī shaykh was a member of the inner court circle, and Bihzād, the talented specialist in Persian miniature painting was the best known artist at court. Most of the poets Bābur

[34] BN-M, f. 164a.

[35] Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad, Master of Persian Painting* (London: Tauris, 1996), 71.

[36] BN-M, f. 164a.

[37] For a discussion of the Mongolian appetite for *nasīj*, gold brocade cloth, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and exchange in the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

mentions also wrote in Persian, often trying to produce variants of well-known Iranian works. In addition the city attracted talented Arabists and religious scholars, such as the Shaykh al-Islam, Sayf al-Dīn Ahmad, a descendant of the important medieval Central Asian theologian, Taftazānī. As Bābur writes of Husayn Bāyqarā's reign, " His was a wonderful age; in it Khurasan, and Herī [Harat] above all was full of learned and matchless men."[38]

Bābur's glowing praise for Husayn Bāyqarā's Harat reminds us what he most admired about his own upbringing and what afterwards he learned about other late fifteenth century Tīmūrid rulers. While surrounded by Turco-Mongol lineages he respected his father's Sunnī Muslim faith, his knowledge of Persian poetry and historical texts. He admired his bravery but also his polished, civilized speech. He spoke warmly of 'Umar Shaykh's biweekly parties and his father's charming, outgoing personality which enlivened these gatherings. Both father and son enjoyed the camaraderie of these parties, gatherings which may have helped to generate a sense of camaraderie in fragile, fissiparous late Tīmūrid states.[39] Bābur's own cultural personality is foreshadowed but only partly by these childhood memories. It is fully delineated in the remainder of the text which offers rich information about his particular life.

The Culture of Language

There are many ways to examine and evaluate the composition of Bābur's cultural personality. One is to examine the text itself. Both his use of the Turkī language and the type of Turkī he uses offer many clues to the ways in which Turco-Mongol and Perso-Islamic strains combined in Bābur. First by using Turkī Bābur implicitly but unmistakably defines his intended audience, a crucial consideration for understanding his overall purpose in composing this

[38] BN-M, f. 177b. For a brief but stimulating introduction to Tīmūrid culture and especially sophisticated Harat Tīmūrid culture see Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Timurid Legacy: A Reaffirmation and Reassessment,' *Cahiers D'Asie Centrale* 3-4 (1997), 9-19. 'Abd al-Hakīm Tabībī gives a late twentieth century Afghan's paean to Harat culture in *Tarīkh-i Harat dar 'ahd-i Tīmūriyān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hīrmand, 1368/1989).

[39] An idea also suggested by Catherine B. Asher in her article, "Bābur and the Timurid Char Bagh: Use and Meaning," *Environmental Design* 9, 11, 51.

memoir. Turkī may best be characterized as the principal Turkic language of Mawarannahr in the Tīmūrid period.[40] By writing in Turkī he addressed the memoirs to his immediate Turkī-speaking companions and to literate speakers of the language in Samarqand and elsewhere in Central Asia and the bordering regions. By writing in Turkī Bābur made it unmistakably clear he meant to enhance his stature as a Tīmūrid ruler, a leader of the Turco-Mongol aristocracy of Mawarannahr. After all he wrote his memoirs in India, but did not compose them in Persian, which he could have done for an elite Indo-Muslim audience. After more than twenty years in Kabul he must have known the language at least as well as Haydar Mīrzā, who wrote the *Ta'rīkh-i Rashīdī* in Persian. Nor did he have them translated into Hindūstānī, a language he did not know, to appeal to the Indian population at large. Nor are any Pashtu translations known, despite his love for Kabul and defeat of the Afghān Lūdī dynasty in 1526; in fact Pushtu did not exist as a literary language at this time.

The Turkī text reminds readers of what Bābur makes clear in the *Vaqā'i'*; he envisioned his Indian period as a brief, unpleasant sojourn during which he would subdue a wealthy but otherwise distasteful region he could exploit to fund an Afghān or Central Asian-based Tīmūrid state. He always thought of himself as a Turco-Mongol, Central Asian conqueror of India, not as an Indian ruler. Throughout his four years in India he always planned to return to Kabul—and never ceased to long for his Central Asian homeland. A quatrain known as a *tuyugh* and probably written in India, is one of several poems he composed to express his nostalgia in exile, in this case for the Naryn river and Lake Issigh Köl, just north and east of the Ferghanah valley.

جانغه سالدی دهر غر بت نارینی
کوز یاشیم بولدی مغولنینك نارینی
بو ارادا مین دیکاندیك بولماسا
کوزلای ایسیك کول و اندین نارینی

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[40] For a concise discussion of [Chaghatay] Turkī see Eckmann, *Chagatay Manual*, 1-10. Karl H. Menges categorizes Turkic languages in his work, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2nd ed. 1995), 59-66.

Time has forged the anguish of exile in my soul,
My tears have become the Mongolian Naryn [river],
Were I not here, as I say,
Let me see the Issigh Köl [lake] and beyond.[41]

If Bābur's choice of Turkī identifies him socially and politically, the kind of Turkī Bābur writes hints at the relative importance of Perso-Islamic elements in his cultural heritage.[42] According to Bābur all the inhabitants of Andijan knew Turkī. Yet, he must have been referring to these peoples' pronunciation or perhaps by Turkī he meant a popular dialect as well as a written language. It is difficult to imagine that unlettered residents of the Andijan bazar or the town's rural hinterland would have spoken in the style, and the vocabulary of Bābur's memoirs.[43] While he expressed himself directly, forcefully and simply when measured against the baroque literary style of contemporary Persian literati, his Turkī prose is highly Persianized in its sentence structure, morphology or word formation and vocabulary. When Bābur wrote in 1527 and 1528 Persian was still the overwhelmingly dominant literary tradition in Central Asia as well as among Muslims in Afghanistan and north-

[41] This quatrain is not included in the Istanbul edition of Bābur's poems but it is found in the collection published by A. N. Samoīlovich in Petrograd in 1917 which I. V. Stebleva used for her article "Some Notes on the Literary Skill of Zahiruddin Muhammad Bābur," in *Gerhard Doerfer Festschrift*, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (1989), 245-47. Stebleva discusses the *tuyugh*, a form of quatrain distinguished by the use of homophones, p. 246. Bilāl Yücel includes this quatrain as verse no. 414 in his edited collection of Bābur's verse. Yücel, 285.

[42] Menges discusses the lexical composition of Turkic languages at various phases of linguistic development in Central Asia, both Mawarannahr and Mughulistan. In the pre-Islamic Turkic epics the largest number of loan words came from Mongolian and then Persian. Menges traces the principal loan words in Uighur, the language of 7th to 9th century eastern Turkistan (Mughulistan) to Chinese, Indic and Iranian sources. Arabic and new Persian vocabulary flooded Mawarannahr following the Islamic conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries, with Arabic quickly becoming dominant in religious and philosophical texts. Large numbers of Mongolian words were absorbed into Turkic languages during Chingīzid ascendancy, a high percentage of them military or administrative terms. *The Turkic Languages and Peoples*, 165-79.

[43] See Ilse Laude-Cirtautas' reference to the decidedly non-Iranized Turkī spoken in Andijan in the twentieth century. "On the Development of Literary Uzbek in the Last Fifty Years," 39, n. 16. Based on the author's personal experience in Uzbekistan in 2000, while Persian or "Tājīk" was spoken widely in Samarqand, in Andijan only scholars were familiar with the language and its literature.

ern India. Persian literary norms were especially dominant in Turkī poetry, as Bābur's own poetry attests.[44] Not only that, but when Bābur alludes to earlier poets and plays on poetic themes, he cites classic Iranian writers such as Hāfiz rather than Turkī writers and Iranian or Iranized literary heroes such as Laylā and Majnūn rather than Central Asian figures.[45] The same was also nearly universally true of Ottoman verse until the late eighteenth century.[46]

The structural influence of Persian on Bābur's prose is most obvious in his repeated use of the relative clause in place of the characteristic Turkic participle or gerund constructions that characterizes both earlier Turkic languages as well as the "modern" Turkish of the republican period, a language based upon the speech of "Turks," of the Anatolian countryside.[47] Within the first few folios of his text he uses the Turkī word *kim,* (who what or which), to construct relative clauses on the model of the Persian synonym *kih.* "The Saihun river," Bābur writes while describing his Ferghanah homeland," which [*kim*] is known as the Khujand water, enters this province from the northeast."[48] He repeatedly uses the phrase *dirlar kim...*, "they say that...." a translation of the Persian, *mīgūyand kih*, to introduce noun clauses in his discussion of the Ferghanah countryside. On the same model he lifts longer phrases directly from Persian. The phrase *bih īn martabah kih*, "to such a degree that..," becomes only slightly transformed in Turkī to *bu martabah-da ...kim.*[49] Similar examples can be found throughout the text.

Bābur's use of these common Persian or Indo-European constructions reflected the dominance of the Persian literary tradition in Turkī prose as well as poetry during his lifetime. His father, after

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[44] Stephen F. Dale, "The Poetry and Autobiography of the *Bābur-Nāma*," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, 3 (August 1996), 635-664.

[45] See his reference to Hāfiz—and Salmān—in *ghazal* 81 and his use of the Laylā and Majnūn story to symbolize his own literary infatuation in *ghazal* 31. Stebleva, 289 & 239. See also Yücel, no. 85, pp. 168-169 and no. 34, p. 138.

[46] Kemal Silay, *Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court* Indiana University Turkish studies Serries 13 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[47] See for example Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orhon Turkic* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968) and Fikret Turan, "On Sentence Structure of Early Oghuz Turkish," *Central Asiatic Journal* 42, 1 (l998), 99-109.

[48] BN-M, f. 2a.

[49] BN-M, f. 7a.

all, read Persian poets and Persian-language histories, not Turkī ones. Bābur also quotes classical Persian poets and mentions he was familiar with several Persian historical texts, Yazdi's *Ẓafar nāmah*, a chronicle of Tīmūr's career, and Jūzjānī's, *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī.* Apart from Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī and Sultan Husayn Bāyqarā, he never mentions a Turkī writer. More importantly, he only quotes Persian verse when he chooses aphorisms to legitimize observations he makes in his memoirs. There were few extant Turkī or proto-Turkī prose works he could have known or used as literary models that antedated the Tīmūrid period.[50] One of the earliest is the mid-fourteenth century Khwārazmian religious text, *Nehecü'l Feradis*, one written in an even more "simple and open" style than Bābur's own memoirs.[51] However, no evidence exists to indicate that Bābur was aware of this particular work. If he took his cue from any Turkī prose text it would probably have been Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's' 1499 essay, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain*, a work considerably more Persianized than Bābur's own prose.[52] Even Navāʾī, who ironically wrote the essay to argue for the natural primacy of Turkī as a literary language, found it impossible to write free from Persian influence.

Bābur's Turkī contains as much Persian vocabulary as Persian assimilated from Arabic, if not more.[53] Central Asian Turkic

[50] BN-M, II, Index no. 8, 441.

[51] János Eckmann, "Ön Söz," in *Harezm, Kipçak ve Çagatay Türkçesi Üzerine Araçtirmalar* (Ankara: Ataturk Kültür...no. 635, 1996), 44, and E. N. Nadjip, "Prozaicheskoe Sochinenie XIV B. "Nakhdzh al-Faradis" Istoriya Izucheniya Kharakternye Osobennosti Yazika" in E. N. Nadjip, *Issledovaniya po Istorii Tiurkskikh Yazikov* XXIV vv.(Moskva: "Nauka," 1989), 137-46.

[52] Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʿī, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain* Robert Devereux trans. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966). See also G. F. Baikova, "*Bābur-Name*": Yazik, Pragmatika Teksta, Stil' (Moskva: "Vostochnaya Literatura," 1994), 223-24.

[53] See Gerhard Doerfer, "The Influence of Persian Language and Literature Among the Turks," in Richard G. Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh ed., *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 241, where the author estimates 50-60% of Chaghatay vocabulary was Persian. See also A. J. E. Bodrogligeti, "Bābur Shāh's Chagatay Version of the *Risāla-i Vālidīya*: A Central Asian Turkic Treatise on How to Emulate the Prophet Muhammad," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* v. 54 (1984), 1-61, where the author discusses not only Persian and Arabic borrowings in this 1528 text, natural enough considering it is a religious treatise originally written in Persian, but also remarks on Bābur's use of "southern Turkic dialectical characteristics" not found in Bābur's memoirs. In his discussion of the early Turkī translation (1393) of Saʿdī's *Gulistān,* Bodrogligeti provides a sophisticated discussion of the lexical and grammatical influences of Arabic and Persian in Turkī poetry and prose. *A*

speakers had undoubtedly used for centuries many of the Persian words Bābur writes repeatedly, such as *mardānah,* manly or courageous, and *pādshāh* monarch and *pādshāhī*, royal.[54] He may have heard some of them for the first time when his father read Firdausī's, *Shāh nāmah.*[55] Otherwise Bābur's prose contains dozens if not hundreds of Persian-based Turkī compounds, such as his term for conquest or imperialism, *mulkgīrliq*, literally "the condition of kingdom-seizing." The word is constructed from *mulk*, itself an Arabic term for state but long part of Persian political vocabulary and *gīr*, the present stem of the Persian verb *gereftān*, "to take" and the Turkī abstract suffix *-liq*. Only the suffix had been changed from the original Persian word, *mulkgīrī.* Considering its usefulness in Central Asian politics, this word had undoubtedly already been absorbed from Persian sources into common Turkī parlance. He himself uses the word to describe his own and others' expansionist ambitions.[56]

The first sentence in which this composite noun appears itself exemplifies the linguistic mixture of Bābur's Turkī:

چون عمر شیخ میرزا بلند همت لیق و اولوق داعیه لیق بادشاه
ایردی همیشه ملك کیرلیق دغدغه سی بار ایردی.

Chūn Umar Shaykh Mīrzā buland himmatlïq ve uluq dāʿiyahlïq bādshāh irdi hamīshih mulkgīrliq daghdaghahsï bir irdi.[57]
"As ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā was an ambitious and covetous ruler he was always bent on conquest."

In this sentence the first and fourth words, *chūn*, "as", and *boland,* "tall" or "great," are Persian, the fifth, *himmat,* "ambition," is an Arabic term with the Turkī suffix, *uluq*, "large" or "great," is a Turkī word while *dāʿiyahlïq*, "desire," is another Turkī-suffixed Arabic noun. *Bādshāh* is Persian and *irdi* is a Turkī verb. The use of *bādshāh* as well as *mulkgīrliq* is a reminder of the prevalence of

Fourteenth Century Turkic Translation of Saʿdī's Gulistan (Sayf-i Sarāyī's Gulistan Bi't-Turkī) (Bloomington, Indiana: c. 1970).

[54] BN-M, II, Concordance, 300, 104.

[55] BN-M, f. 7a.

[56] BN-M, f. 56a. Bābur later uses the ending with the variant spelling -lik.

[57] BN-M, f. 5b.

Iranian political terminology among Turco-Mongol rulers, who often invoked Iranian imperial vocabulary to express their own political ambitions. The second phrase begins with the Persian adverb *hamīshih*, "always," followed by *mulkgīrliq*, another Arabic noun, *daghdaghahsï*, "inclination," here with the Turkī possessive ending and finally the Turkī verb, *bar irdi*. The grammar is Turkī, but apart from two Turkī words, *uluq* and the verb, the vocabulary is Persian or Arabic and in the case of Arabic words, very likely absorbed from Persian sources.

Bābur's Turkī is thus a composite language, evidently reflecting his own upbringing in Andijān's predominantly Turkī environment, combined with Persian literary and Iranian political influences and Arabic borrowings, taken either from Persian or directly from the Quran or Islamic religious texts.[58] It cannot have been a vocabulary of his Ferghanah youth. He must have acquired many of his Persian and Arabic words and expressions during his Kabul days. Almost every sentence of his memoirs contains mixtures of Turkī, Persian and Arabic vocabulary. His most purely Turkī sentences are those in which he is discussing life or the environment of his Central Asian homeland, as when he says that "Khujand's hunting and fowling are very good," using all Turkī words with the exception of the Persian, *besyār*, "very."

خجند نينك اولاغى و قوشلاغى بسيار يخشى دور.

Khujandning aulaghï ve qushlaghï besyār yakshï dur.[59]

As far as Arabic is concerned Bābur uses common parenthetical expressions and adverbial phrases such as *fi-l jumlah*, "in brief," or *fi-l-hāl*, "now," words that had probably been absorbed into the speech of educated Turkī speakers. He shifts overwhelmingly to

[58] Gerhard Doerfer in his article, "The influence of Persian Language and Literature Among the Turks," argues that Arabic words in Turkish nearly always come from Persian. Hovannisian and Sabagh ed., *The Persian Presence in the Islamic world*, 241. That may be true for many common terms and phrases, but as will be seen below Bābur had to have assimilated much of his Islamic religious vocabulary directly from the Quran or from his study of Islamic law. See especially Bābur's work the *Mubayin* or especially the section known as the *Kitāb al-zakāt*, discussed below, written about 1521, essentially a treatise on "Islamic" taxation policies, which reflects Bābur's sophisticated knowledge of Islamic law, which he began studying formally in Kabul in June, 1519. BN-M, f. 237a.

[59] BN-M, f. 4a.

Arabic vocabulary only when he discusses Islamic religious issues or ethical questions.[60] In religion, he reports, Samarqand people are all Sunni, *pāk* (Per.) *mazhab (*Ar.*)*, "doctrinally pure," *mutasharrīʿ* (Ar.*)*, "followers of the law" and *mutadaiyin* (Ar.*)*, "steadfast in faith."[61]

ایلی تمام سنی و پاك مذ هب و متسرع و متدین ایل دور.

Eli tamām Sunnī va pāk mazhab va mutasharrīʿ u mutadaiyin il dur.

However, when Bābur ritually uses devotional or pious Islamic formulas he expresses very few purely in Arabic. *Inshāʾllāh* occurs only four times in the entire text. When Bābur invokes god he normally uses the Mongol word *tengri*, originally the overarching steppe sky, for the deity of the Arabic Quran. Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, in contrast, uses Allāh or the Iranian/Indo-European *khudā* far more frequently than *tengri*.[62] Bābur's preference for *tengri* as well as his modest use of Arabic phraseology elsewhere in the text may reflect not only his birthplace in the overwhelmingly Turkī-speaking Ferghanah valley, but also his status as a member of its military aristocracy rather than a cosmopolitan *adīb* like Navāʾī, or an *ʿalim*, like his childhood religious tutor in Andijan, Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī. An example of this usage within what may be characterized as an unusually highly Arabicized Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic sentence, is one of Bābur's rare invocations of god, usually done to punctuate his narration of a crises.

تینكری تعالی كیم اوز قدرت كامله سی بیله هر ایشتیم نی
هر محل دا انداق كیم باید و شاید بی منت مخلوق راست
كیلتوروب تور.

Tengrī taʿāla kim öz qudrat kāmilah si bileh har ishtim ni har mahalda andaq kim bāyad shāyad bī minnat makhlūq rāst kilturub tur.[63]

"God, the most high, who alone with his perfect power, and without the help of any created being, has caused all my affairs in every instance to turn out properly."

[60] Blagova, "*Bābur-Name,*" 225.
[61] BN-M, f. 44b.
[62] G. F. Baikova, "*Bābur-Name*" *Yazik, Pragmatika Teksta, Stil*, 120.
[63] BN-M, f. 16b.

Bābur sometimes uses Turkī and Persian or Perso-Arabic or Arabic synonyms interchangeably according to no obvious pattern. The phrase "known as" or "called," for example, he alternately renders as the Turkī *atlïq* or the Arabic *mashūr*, the latter probably taken directly from Persian sources. In other instances, though, Bābur seems to chose or at least use Turkī or Persian and Arabic vocabulary in a way that conveys a cultural point. When he describes his uncultured uncles, the Tīmūrid, Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā of Samarqand, and the Chingīzid, Kichik Khan of Mughulistan, both of whom he characterizes as simple and rustic, he uses a Turkī verb *olgaymaq* (اولغايماق) to say that they grew up or matured.[64] Yet, when Bābur alludes to the sophisticated Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's upbringing in cosmopolitan Harat he uses instead the Perso-Arabic phrase *nushūʾ u namāʾ*, the only time he uses the phrase in his memoir.[65] *Nushūʾ* is derived from an Arabic root that means both "to grow or develop" but also "to compose or write", and *inshāʾ*, "elegant composition" or simply "creative," is a noun derived from the same verb. By using the Arabic term in his description of Navāʾī he evokes the cultured, urban milieu of the last great Tīmūrid court, a world apart from the "country cousin" character of his Tīmūrid and Chingīzid uncles.[66] Whether he consciously chose to use words in this way or simply employed the vocabulary in the way that seemed most natural at the time, his selective usage makes an important distinction between these men's cultural personalities.

Turks, Turks and turk Turks

Just as Bābur's use of Turkī and its linguistic characteristics offer certain insights into his cultural personality, he also reveals several aspects of his political and social attitudes by the various ways he uses the word Turk—ethnically, politically and sociologically, posi-

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[64] BN-M, f. 18b and f. 103b.

[65] BN-M, f. 2b.

[66] In respect to Navāʾi's Turkī see the glossary of his literary language compiled in fifteenth century Harat. A. K. Borobkov, "*Badāʾiʿ al-Lugat*" *Slovar' Tāliʿ Īmānī Geratskovo K Sochineniyam Ali Shera Navoi* (Moskva:Vostochnoī Literatury, 1961). An interesting glossary/dictionary of Turkī and Persian produced in India during the reign of the emperor Aurungzeb (1658-1707) is by Muhammed Yakub Chingi, *Kelur-Name* A. Ibragimova ed. (Tashkent: "Fan," 1982).

tively and pejoratively.[67] Bābur occasionally implies that he thinks of "Turks" generally as an ethnic group, a people who speak a common language and sometimes at least, have distinct racial characteristics. When he describes the population of Andijan early in his memoir he remarks: "Its people are Turks, he observes, and "each of the city folk (*shahrī*) and merchants (*bāzārī)* knows Turkī."[68] Otherwise he principally identifies Turks as a distinct group in the Kabul and Indian sections of the memoirs, when he is distinguishing them from other people (*il* or *qaum)*. When, for example, he talks about the difficulty of governing Kabul he says:

> Kabul and Ghaznī were full of evil and strife. Turks and Mongols, tribesmen and retainers, Afghāns and Hazārahs. Various people and *ulus* were congregated there.[69]

Then following his victory at Pānīpat in 1526, Bābur discusses pursuing the Afghān forces which he has just defeated, and recalls he "summoned Turkish and Indian amīrs" (*Turk umarā'yi ni ve Hind umarā'yi-ni)* to a war council.[70] Apart from his reference to Sultān Husayn Bāyqarā's "slanted eyes," only one other time does Bābur suggest that when he refers to Turks he also had in mind racial as well as linguistic identity. He does so when he describes his cousin, Baysunghur Mīrzā's physical appearance, and remarks "He had big eyes, a round face, a medium build [and] Turcoman features."[71] Otherwise he uses Turk in much more specific ways.

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[67] For a discussion of the earliest known usage of the term *turk* see P. B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Çinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* II, 39-45. See also Peter Jackson, "Jūzjānī's use of the word 'Turk" in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate, A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Appendix I, 326. Jūzjānī primarily used "Turk" to identify Turkic *ghulām*s or "slave" troops and only occasionally for Turkic pastoral nomads.

[68] BN-M, f. 2b.

[69] BN-M, fs. 187b-188a.

[70] BN-M, f. 299a. In this passage, though, it is less clear "Turk" is used ethnically, as some of these commanders are likely to have been from Chaghatay lineages.

[71] BN-M, f. 68b. For a brief, early appreciation of Turks as a distinct ethnic group see E. Denison Ross' edition of the 1206 Persian text of the Ghaznavid writer Fakru'd-Dīn Mubārakshāh Marvar-rūdī, *Ta'rikh-i Fakhru'd Din Mubārakshāh* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1927). The author includes a Turkī quatrain with Persian translation to help make his point about the superiority of the Turks. In the eleventh century at least, "Turkmen" was used to identify southwestern Turks and also was applied to their dialect, whereas the eastern Turkic dialect was

In political terms Bābur employs Turk both to identify Tīmūr's Turco-Mongol confederation, the *turk ulusi* and his own lineage, and to claim dynastic legitimacy.[72] He makes only a single direct reference to Tīmūr's confederation, where he distinguishes it from the Mongol *ulus*—*Mughul ve Turk ulusi.*[73] However, he may be referring to the then fragmented remnants of the *ulus* when he describes the situation in 1507 after the Chingīzid Shībānī Khan Uzbek captured Harat. Bābur remembers, that "Strange people and ancient foes, like the Uzbeks and Shībānī Khan [Uzbek], had taken possession of all the lands in the hands of Tīmūr Beg's descendants. Turks and Chaghatays who still remain in corners and margins, have joined the Uzbek, some willingly, some reluctantly."[74] He seems to be referring here not merely to Tīmūrid mīrzās, Tīmūr's descendants, but to former members of the *Turk ulusi*, just as his reference to Chaghatays may refer not merely to his maternal relations, Chingīzids descended from Chingīz Khān's second son Chaghatay, but may refer to their followers as well.[75] The lack of other references to the Turk *ulus* in the text may reflect the realities of late Tīmūrid politics, where Tīmūr's *ulus* was only a distant memory rather than a political reality.

Bābur more commonly uses Turk in a political/military sense when he discusses or justifies his Tīmūrid political legitimacy. He explicitly connected himself to Tīmūr on his genealogical seals where he identified himself as "Ibn ʿUmar Shaykh" then traced his ancestors back through Mīrān Shāh to Tīmūr.[76] In his memoirs he only once explicitly refers to himself as a Tīmūrid, when he includes himself as one of the "Tīmūrid sultans" (*timuriyeh salatīni*).[77]

called "Turkī," the word Bābur always uses to identify his language and literature. See Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 214.

[72] See Beatrice Forbes Manz on the Ūlūs Chaghatay, *The rise and rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chapter 2.

[73] BN-M, f. 45b.

[74] BN-M, f. 213a.

[75] See Beatrice Forbes Manz, "The Development and Meaning of Chaghatai Identity," in Jo-Ann Gross ed., *Muslims in Central Asia*: Expressions of Identity and Change (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1992), 27-46.

[76] Annebel Teh Gallop, "The genealogical seal of the Mughal emperors of India," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd Ser. 9, 1 (April, 1999), 107. Bābur's grandson, Akbar (r. 1556-1605), also had seals made that traced his genealogy to Tīmūr, as did later Tīmūrid-Mughul emperors. AA, I, 54.

[77] BN-M, f. 34a. Otherwise he uses *Tīmūrī* only twice, as a name for a melon, *mīr Tīmūrī*. BN-M, fs. 5a & 48b.

Bābur asserts his dynastic claims in the text implicitly by equating his *khānivādih* or family with Tīmūr's line. Referring to his second seizure of Samarqand in 1500, Bābur remarks that "For nearly one hundred years the capital [Tīmūr's capital] had been in our family (*khānivādih)*,"[78] and while describing his visit to Harat in 1506 Bābur self-importantly observes "I had twice taken my seat on the ancestral throne (*ata takhtida*) of Samarqand by direct force. I had fought and struggled with the alien enemy [the Uzbeks] for the sake of this family/dynasty (*khānivādih*)."[79] Later he employs Turk as a lineage and political synonym for *khānivādih*. Thus while narrating his first serious military campaigns in the Panjab in 1519 against the small state of Bherah, Bābur cites Tīmūr's conquests as precedent for his claims. "Tīmūr Beg had gone into Hindustan; from the time he went out again, these several countries [i.e. Bherah, Khushab, Janab and Chiniut] had been held by his descendants and the dependents and adherents of those descendants."[80] Referring to these same four territories Bābur writes: "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan, and as these several countries , Bherah, Khushab, Janab and Chiniut had once been held by the Turk, I pictured them as my own."[81] In making these claims he may have been aware that Shāh Rukh was recognized as an overlord by the so-called Sayyid monarchs of Delhi, and that Ulugh Beg, treated the last Sayyid ruler as *his* feudatory in a letter dated to the late 1440's, assigning him the government of Delhi![82] Then alluding perhaps to Tīmūr's sack of Delhi in 1398, Bābur reports that "Thinking of the Turk-occupied provinces as our very own," he sent to the Afghān ruler of north India, Ibrahim Lūdī, a royal present, "a goshawk and asked for the provinces that had long been dependencies of the Turk."[83] Finally, Bābur concludes these references when he quotes a *rubāʿī* he sent in August 1526 to the

[78] BN-M, f. 85a.
[79] BN-M, f. 187b.
[80] BN-M, f. 224b.
[81] BN-M, f. 223b.
[82] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate,* A Political and Military History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 322, citing the fifteenth century historian Muhammad Bihāmadkhānī and Ishtiyaq Ahmad Zilli, "Development of *Inshā* Literature to the End of Akbar's Reign," in Muzaffar Alam et al, *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture* (Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 343, quoting the late sixteenth-century compilation *Munsh'āt-i Namakīn.*
[83] BN-M, f. 226b.

still-entrenched Lūdī governor of the nearby Bayanah fortress who refused to recognize his authority. "Along with royal letters of threat and promise"[84] in which he demanded Nizām Khan's surrender, Bābur wrote in his poem: "Strive not with the Turk O Mīr of Bayanah."[85]

Bābur's identity as a Turk legitimized his imperial aspirations and conquests but he also implicitly recognizes the legitimacy of Chingīzids. He was disappointed that his Mongol uncle, Mahmūd Khan of Tashkent, refused to support him with more than kind words, often helping instead other Mongols such as Sultān Ahmad Tambal. Bābur caustically ridicules other Turks or Afghāns who affected sovereign habits, but he never questions whether Mahmūd Khan or any of his maternal Chingīzid relatives could rightfully struggle for power. Bābur implicitly grants that right even to Shībānī Khan Uzbek, a man he despised for destroying Tīmūrid power in Mawarannahr. He seems to assume that Tīmūrids, who had ruled in Mawarannahr, Iran and Afghānistān for nearly a century, had the most compelling sovereign claim to these territories. While Bābur does not say so explicitly, according to his cousin, Haydar Mīrzā, Bābur's paternal or Tīmūrid grandfather, Sultān Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā (d.1469) had done so years earlier when he told Bābur's maternal or Chingīzid grandfather, Yūnas Khan, that he was now pādshāh or sovereign, and not a Mongol vassal as Tīmūr had technically been.[86]

Bābur thought of Turks, Tīmūr's kin, as a legitimizing political identity, but he also used it in a sociological sense to identify one of a number of populations whom he calls *sahrā nishīn*, that is steppe dwellers, or, evidently, pastoral nomads. In doing so he made a distinction that some Central Asian Turks themselves made centuries earlier when they distinguished themselves as Turks from the *Tat*, the sedentary Iranian population of the oasis cities.[87] In his descriptions of Ferghanah and the Samarqand region Bābur says that the *sahrā nishīn* are Aymaq and Turk, Mongol and Turk, while around Kabul they are Afghān and Hazārah, the latter the Mon-

[84] BN-M, f. 298a.
[85] Ibid., f. 298a.
[86] TR-T, f. 29a.
[87] Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-çinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* II (1982), 41-42.

gol-influenced but mainly Persian-speaking population of the mountainous areas west of Kabul. Bābur does not say how he distinguishes among these four pastoral nomadic populations, particularly since some Hazārahs also spoke Mongol, but in the case of Aymaq, Turk and Afghān real or putative descent from acknowledged Mongol, Turkic or Afghān tribes is probably the defining criteria. To some degree the distinction may also be a linguistic/ethnic one, at least between the Aymaqs, Turks and Afghāns. In Bābur's mind the association between Turks and pastoral nomadic life was still very strong. In one instance he seems to use the word as a kind of generic term to designate pastoral nomadic groups in general, as when describing a group of villagers near Ura Tipa in the western Ferghanah valley. He says of them that "Although the people are Sarts [settled people] and villagers [sedentary] they are herders and shepherds like Turks."[88]

Bābur implicitly distinguishes himself from individuals or tribes who lived like *sahrā nishīn* Turks or Mongols or Afghāns, whether they actually lived in the countryside or not. Tīmūr's *Turk ulusi* may have been largely nomadic but Bābur distances himself from the *sahrā nishīn* Turks of his day, often characterizing them with one of a half-dozen Arabic, Persian and Turkī synonyms to convey their simple, robust, unsophisticated nature. They are, he writes, *sādih* or *sādiq*, "simple," *rūstā'ī*, "rustic," *mardānah*, "manly," *qazaqanah*, "vagabond-like" or, they are *turk,* a synonym he uses for simple, rustic and vagabond-like, and perhaps brave as well.[89] A typical example of the way Bābur uses *turk* as an adjective is his description of his Tīmūrid uncle, Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā, the ruler of Samarqand, whom he depicts as one who resembled a nomad or possibly a peasant, despite being raised in cosmopolitan Samarqand. "Although," Bābur writes, "Sultān Ahmad had grown up in the city, he was rustic and artless (*turk ve sādih*)."[90] Put another way Sultān Ahmad was a Turkī-speaking, turk Turk, a simple Tīmūrid who spoke Turkī. Or Tengri Birdi Samanchï, one of Sultān Husayn

[88] BN-M, f. 97a.

[89] In a thirteenth century Persian text the word *rūstā'ī* was used in Iran in the sense of peasant or countryman. CHI 5,284. It is also found in the *Nehecül Faradīs* (see above n.31). See E. I. Fazilov, *Starouzbezkii Yazik* (Tashkent: Fan), 1966, II, p. 233.

[90] BN-M, f. 18b.

Bāyqarā's Turco-Mongol nobles, he characterizes as "a simple (*turk*), brave (*mardānah*) young swordsman."[91] Haydar Mīrzā, occasionally uses *turk* in the same way, as when he observes of Bābur's Tīmūrid line, which he called "Chaghatay," that in Bābur's early life "the Chaghatay were very simple (*turk*), they were not urbanized (*bāzārī*) as they are at present."[92] In the Ottoman Empire an identical usage persisted down to the twentieth century with the rustic, unsophisticated country folk of rural Anatolia described as Turks to distinguish them from the cultured "Ottomans" of Istanbul and the great cities of the empire. In an anonymous seventeenth century Ottoman treatise on the janissary corps, the slave troops recruited from Christian populations, the author contemptuously refers to members of the Muslim Anatolian peasantry as "Turks, murks."[93]

Bābur's description of the *sahrā nishīn* and those who acted like them contains a mixture of nostalgia and condescension that literate urbanites the world over have felt for their "simple" but "brave," "artless" and "rustic" country cousins. They were the noble savages of his day, morally more pure than city dwellers, but still a rough, unsophisticated lot. Particularly in the case of Turks the idea that they were culturally "turk" was a common stereotype dating back to the time that Turkic slaves were brought into the ʿAbbasid Caliphate in large numbers. The Arab historian Ibn Hassūl portrayed them this way when he wrote:

> The Turks know not how to flatter and coax, they know not how to practice hypocrisy or backbiting, pretence or slander, dishonesty or haughtiness on their acquaintance, or mischief on those that associate with them. They are strangers to heresy and not spoiled by caprice....[94]

More to the point of Bābur's own perspective as a political Turk, that is a Tīmūrid, but certainly not a *sahrā nishīn* Turk of the

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[91] BN-M, f. 175b.

[92] TR-T, f. 70b. Bābur also speaks caustically of Afghans who opposed or offended him, as when he says of some who wished to sit in his presence, "These Afghans are very simple (*rūstāʾī*) and stupid (*bīhūsh*) people...." BN-M, f. 262b.

[93] Pal Fodor, "State and Society, Crises and Reform in 15th-17th Century Ottoman Mirror for Princes," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1986), 229. I am indebted to Ms. Lisa Balabanlilar, Department of History, Ohio State University for this reference.

[94] Quoted by Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 209.

Ferghanah countryside, Bābur criticized the Turks, Mongols and Afghāns as destroyers of settled village and urban life, the kind of life that generated agricultural income and supported the cultured social life he admired in Samarqand and Harat and tried to replicate in Kabul and northern India. He reported that in Ferghanah many towns had been ruined and depopulated because of the depredations of Mongols and Uzbeks. He found similar conditions in parts of Afghānistān when he arrived there in the early sixteenth century. *Maʿmūrah yoq,* "It was unpopulated," he writes of one Afghān district.[95] Bābur approvingly writes of Majd al-Dīn Muhammad, a minister of Sultān Husayn Bāyqarā, that he "made the districts inhabited and populated" (*maʿmūr ve ābādān*),[96] using Arabic and Persian synonyms for settled agrarian life. He says of the Afghān district where he witnessed the destructions wrought by Afghān tribes that he had it settled (*maʿmūrah*), which made the road safe.[97]

Maʿmūr is derived from the Arabic root *ʿamara*, the root of the term *ʿumrān,* often translated as "civilization," but more accurately rendered as "society." The word *ʿumrān* "is derived from a root which means ʿto build up, to cultivate,ʾ and is used to designate any settlement above the level of individual savagery...."[98] Ibn Khaldūn uses it when he distinguishes *ʿumrān badawī*, rural agrarian and nomadic society from *ʿumrān hadarī*, sedentary/urban society.[99] However, *ʿumrān* also connotes 'population,' "and Ibn Khaldūn frequently uses the word in this sense."[100] This seems to be precisely the meaning that Bābur has in mind when he pairs it with *abadān*. Bābur also seems to have shared Ibn Khaldūn's perception of the contrast and hostility between nomadic and sedentary society, a contrast observed even earlier by the Arab historian Jāhiz about the society of northeastern Iran.

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[95] BN-M, fs. 1 and 132a.

[96] BN-M, f. 177a

[97] BN-M, f. 132a.

[98] Franz Rosenthal, "Translator's Introduction," in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* Franz Rosenthal ed. and trans., I, lxxvi.

[99] See Muhsin Mahdi's insightful discussion of Khaldun's use of these terms. *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), 193 and n. 7.

[100] Ibid., lxxvii.

> The difference between the Turk and Khurāsānī is not like the difference between the Persian and the Arab, or between Rūmī and Saqlabī or Zanjī and Habashī, let alone what is even more disparate in constitution and in the difference separating it; on the contrary, it is like the difference between the Meccan and Medinan, or Bedouin and sedentary, or plainsman and mountaineer, or like the difference between the mountain-dwelling Tayyi' tribesmen and the plains dwelling Tayyi'.[101]

Bābur's portrayal of the contrasting characteristics of the desert and the sown is almost identical to that of Ibn Khaldūn, if lacking the North African's Aristotelian-structured theory. Throughout his memoir Bābur speaks like as a sophisticated urbanite who saw progress in the settlement of tribes and the agrarian development of the countryside. The kind of social disorder that Bābur associated with such *sahrā nishīn* as the Afghāns was engagingly personified by his young uncle, Kīchīk Khan. Describing him as "rather simple and somewhat rough spoken" Bābur says that while he was an observant Muslim, "as he had grown up in a remote place the tent and place where he sat was in disarray, like that of a vagabond, strewn with melons, grapes and saddlery."[102] The key words in this passage are: *bitakallufanih*, unceremoniously, which Bābur had earlier used to describe his father but meaning something closer here to chaotic, disordered or disheveled, and *qazaqanah*, vagabond-like.

Bābur associated *sahrā nishīn* Turks—or Uzbeks, Afghāns and Mongols—with social disorder, economic ruin and political chaos. At one point he complains of the innate qualities of Mongols that made them untrustworthy, although it is often difficult to see that their quixotic loyalties distinguished them greatly from Bābur's contentious Tīmūrid relatives. However, when Bābur spoke of "the consequence of Mongolness,"[103]

....مغول لیق نینک نتیجه...

Mughulïqning natījih...

he probably had in mind not just the political betrayal that this particular sentence alludes to but the full range of Mongol-caused social and economic destruction that he had written about else-

[101] Quoted by Bosworth in *The Ghaznavids*, 206.
[102] BN-M, fs. 103b and 108b.
[103] BN-M, f. 65a.

where in the text. Bābur's attitudes echo and perhaps were influenced by those of his maternal, that is Chingīzid grandfather, Yūnas Khan. According to Haydar Mīrzā, who ended his eventful life as governor of Kashmir, Yūnas Khan '"loved" or "longed for" cities.

میشه در آرزوی شهر می بود.

Hamīshih dar ārzū-yi shāhr mībūd.[104]

Haydar Mīrzā himself gave thanks in his history that he had been saved "from the circle of the Mughul *ulus*," even though they were his uncles and cousins.[105]

Yūnas Khān's feelings are completely understandable, for he had been forced into exile from Mughulistan in 1429 and did not return until 1456. He spent many of these years in Iran, where he acquired the cultural polish and tastes of an urbane Iranian courtier. After being invited back to lead the tribes in Mughulistan in 1456 he found himself facing the typical decentralized political turmoil of tribal politics and the tribesmens' unwillingness to settle, much less live in towns such as Kashgar.[106] Yūnas Khan discovered that the Mongols wouldn't follow him even if he himself lived in the relatively small settlement of Aqsu. According to Haydar Mīrzā, Mongol tribes would not support Yūnas Khan unless he agreed never to force them to settle in cities or cultivated areas—*shahr u vilāyat*—and he had to agree. Haydar Mīrzā also remarks that Yūnas Khan believed that Mongols would never become Muslims if they didn't settle.

خان همت بر گماشت که تا این قوم شهر نشین نشود هرگز
مسلمانی صورت نه بندد..

Khan himmat bar gumāsht kih īn qaum shāhr nishīn nashavad,
Hargiz Musalmānī sūrat nahbandad.[107]

Yet it seems probable from Haydar Mīrzā's description of Yūnas Khān's effort to bring Mughulistan under control, that Islam was the Khan's metaphor for sedentarization and all its political social

[104] TR-T, f. 31b.
[105] Ibid., f. 4a.
[106] TR-T, f. 31b.
[107] TR-T, f. 62b.

and economic consequences. In fact Haydar Mīrzā might equally have said that these Mongols would never settle down unless they became Muslims. The populations of Iranian and Central Asian cities were Muslim; sedentarization meant Islamization and vice versa.

Bābur's attitude toward inhabitants of such major cities as Samarqand and Harat encompasses the same contradictory feelings that are visible in Ibn Khaldūn's writings.[108] Bābur admired their culture while often decrying their decadence. He does not use Turk or turk in any sense to label, describe or characterize urban inhabitants, except in his brief early reference to Andijan or in his occasional characterization of men such as Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā as "simple." Otherwise when Bābur discusses his Tīmūrid relatives or other city dwellers he writes either to praise their cultural polish and intellectual sophistication or to decry their moral decadence and political decline. One man whom he admired greatly and seemed to epitomize for Bābur the political Turk or Tīmūrid as ideal ruler was his cousin Baysunghur Mīrzā. "He was," writes Bābur, "a just, good natured and learned prince.... He was generous in moderation. He wrote the *taʿlīq* script very well. He was also not a bad painter and recited [his own] poetry."[109] Baysunghur Mīrzā exhibited, that is, the aristocratic virtues of balance, justice and cultural accomplishment admired by Yūnas Khan, Haydar Mīrzā and Bābur himself, and exhibited to a significant degree by ʿUmar Shaykh Mīrzā. He was the antithesis of the rough-hewn, destructive, steppe-dwelling *sahrā nishīn* Turks, Mongols and Afghāns.

While he admired the aristocratic virtues and cultural sophistication of such men Bābur also believed many Tīmūrids and their followers to be morally corrupt. He never says this of *sahrā nishīn* or his country Tīmūrid or Chingīzid cousins who acted like nomads, however much they drank and caroused! Here his characterization not only echoes Ibn Khaldūn, but also, one might add, the historians of most complex societies who share the apparently universal human assumption that rural people were closer to being "good" than urbanites who inevitably suffer moral decline. As has been

[108] Best read in the unabridged edition. See Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* Franz Rosenthal ed. and trans.

[109] BN-M, f. 68b.

seen Bābur ascribes the fall of Tīmūrid Harat to Sultān Husayn Bāyqarā's decadence, which was manifested in his sons' effeteness, a generalized urban vice. In this way too these men exemplified Ibn Khaldūn's theory, for in Bābur's estimation, they had lost their ferocity and forgotten how to defend themselves.

Ibn Khaldūn ʿs attitudes represent more than just a useful point of reference for Bābur's attitudes toward rural and urban populations. Ibn Khaldūn articulated more fully than any other Muslim or Middle Eastern scholar the unsettling perception of an intelligent, cultured city dweller that the sedentary culture he embodied and valued gradually but inevitably produced social and moral decay and ultimately political collapse. Bābur never paused to reflect on this dilemma, but it is inherent in his autobiography. When he catalogues the elegant life (*pur zarāfat*) of such Harat Tīmūrids as Husayn Bayqara's sons, his cousins, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muzaffar Mīrzā, the nearly synonymous phrases he uses to describe his cousins' social graces are *suhbat ve suhbatārāyalïq* and *ikhtilāt u āmīzesh*, conversation and comradeship, friendship and sociableness.[110] Far from condemning these qualities he had seen his father display Bābur admired them, and throughout the text writes movingly of his delight in gatherings where the Turco-Mongol elite conversed, drank, listened to music and poetry. Bābur did not criticize his Harat cousins for these qualities but for their maddening lack of military skills. If he had read Ibn Khaldūn, Bābur would not have been surprised to learn the cultural splendor he admired and reveled in while visiting Harat sapped the manliness and bravery he had observed in his father.

The comradeship of social gatherings Bābur so enjoyed was important to him for other reasons beyond his delight in good food, witty conversation and, by 1519 at least, wine and the drug-laced confection, *maʿjūn*. This had to do with another aspect of Ibn Khaldūn's theory, the social cohesion of pastoral nomadic societies. Based upon his own experience with tribal levies in North Africa, Ibn Khaldūn believed that pastoral nomads were successful as military forces because their close kinship ties and continuous shared hardships generated a degree of social cohesion that established, urban-based states could not match. Bābur was not a nomad

[110] Ibid., 187b.

and many of his and his father's *beg*s were not close relatives. Nonetheless he grew up in a relatively informal political culture which, by force of circumstance, continued to be true for the remainder of his career. Comradeship was a critical element in his military and political fortunes, as he suggests in a description he gives of his trip back from Harat to Kabul in the winter of 1506-07. Having stayed too long enjoying the pleasures of Harat he and his companions, including Q̄āsim Beg Qauchin and perhaps two to three hundred troops, became trapped by heavy snows and had to take refuge in a cave. Bābur remembered he refused to sit inside the small cave while many of his troops had to remain outside because, he writes, it would have been neither "manly" (*murūwat*) nor "comradely" (*hamjihitliq*). Then as Bābur does so often in the text he culturally ratifies this decision by citing a Persian proverb, "Death with friends is a nuptial."[111] His writing about this event in Agra in 1527 or 1528 may serve as a reminder that even after occupying the city in 1526, Bābur depended on comradeship with his senior commanders to maintain the cohesiveness of his army. Only during the reign of his grandson, Akbar (1556-1605) was the Tīmūrid-Mughul state transformed into an empire.

Islam

Bābur thus was an urbanized Turk/Tīmūrid. Like Ibn Khaldūn he was also a practicing Muslim. As Bābur's description of his father indicates, he grew up in a Sunnī Muslim religious environment. Moreover he took Islamic society to be the norm. Thus he never discusses conversion, unlike Haydar Mīrzā who was familiar with the history and contemporary culture of partly Islamized Mughulistan. Nor does Bābur even allude to non-Muslims in his narrative of his Ferghanah years; if the nearby *sahrā nishīn* were anything other than Muslims he never mentions it. In his day even his dishevelled, vagabond-like young Mongol uncle Kichik Khan from the Altï Shahr "was renowned for justice and Muslim virtues!"

[111] BN-M, f. 194b.

کیچیك خان نینگ عدل و مسلمانلیق بیله شهرتی بار ایدی.

Kichik Khanning ʿadil ve Musalmānlīq bileh shurati bar idi.

The pervasive influence of this heritage can be seen in such everyday signs as the calendar he used and how he kept time. He dated and timed his memories in Islamic units. He chronicles the events of his life, the *vaqāʿiʿ* of his memoirs, on the Islamic lunar calendar, not the Iranian solar or the duodecennial, twelve-animal, East Asian calendar that the Mongols brought to Mawarannahr and Iran in the thirteenth century.[112] When he designates months, they are Arabic/Islamic months; his festivals were Muslim festivals. In India in 1527, for example, he celebrated ʿĪd and recalled where he had been on previous celebrations to end Ramadan. He usually recalls the time of day according to whether it was before or after one of the five daily prayers. Only occasionally does he time battles by the height of the sun over the horizon.

An *ʿalīm* from a prominent Ferghanah religious lineage gave Bābur religious instruction. Bābur reports that after his father's death he adhered to the teachings of this man, Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī.

اتام دین سونك خواجه قاضی نینك یمن قدمیدین زاهد و
متقی ایدیم.

Atamdin sung Khwājah Qāzīning yumn qadamidin zāhid ve mutaqqī idim.

After my father(died) I was steadfast and god-fearing in Khwājah Qāzī's auspicious footsteps.[113]

He was a descendant of a distinguished line of Burhān al-Dīn ʿAlī Qilich al-Marghīnānī (b. c. 1135-d.1197), the author of a well known Hanafī text, the *Hidāyat*.[114] Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī was also a disciple of Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār, the most influential Naqshbandī *shaykh* of the period. At birth Bābur had also been formally committed to Ahrār, joining many other Tīmūrids as a disciple of the Shaykh and a member of the Naqshbandī order. As a student of Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī and disciple of Ahrār, Bābur

[112] For an introduction to these dating systems see Ahmad Birashk, *A Comparative Calendar of the Iranian, Muslim Lunar and Christian Eras* (Costa Mesa California and New York: Mazda Publishers,1993), 11-38.

[113] BN-M, f. 189b.

[114] BN-M, fs. 3b & 16a.

had both a respected Hanafī Sunnī education and membership in an influential sufi order.[115]

Given his education it is not surprising that Bābur often spoke admiringly of men who were pious and devout, as he did of his father and many others. One of Sultān Husayn's Turkic nobles, Walī Beg, he describes as a Muslim, "observant of his prayers, simple and sincere (*turk ve sādiq*),"[116] and one of his own long-time supporters, Qāsim Beg, Bābur characterizes as an "upright, god-fearing Muslim."[117] As has been noted, he reported favorably on the fact that "The people of Samarqand are all Sunnis, doctrinally pure (*pāk mazhab*), upright adherents of the *sharī῾ah*."[118]

Bābur expresses his fundamental religious convictions unmistakably when he mentions that in 1519 he ordered the massacre of the population of Bajaur, northeast of Kabul, because, he says, they had become pagans and Islam had been lost among them.[119] Bābur also manifests his Sunnī antagonism for Shī῾īs on several occasions, as when he criticizes Aq Begim, one of Sultan Husayn Bayqara's wives. After remarking she was a "stupid, talkative woman," Bābur goes on to say Aq Begim "was also a *rāfizī*," a Shī᾿ah or heretic.[120] No evidence can be found in any of Bābur's writings to support the notion he seriously considered abandoning his Sunnī upbringing. His brief flirtation with the Shī῾ī faith during his third occupation of Samarqand in 1511 was a political act to placate his then Iranian Safavid allies—and it was seen as such by Haydar Mīrzā and others.

As his use of the Turco-Mongol term *tengrī* indicates, Bābur's Islam retained a Central Asian linguistic and cultural tinge, just as Iranians' use of the Indo-European word, *khudā* is one linguistic mark of the Persian element in Perso-Islamic culture. He himself explicitly comments on the coexistence of Turco-Mongol and Islamic norms in late fifteenth century Mawarannahr, while unequi-

[115] Ferghanah, Samarqand and Mawarannahr generally were within Bukhara's theological orbit. For the pre-Mongol period see Shahab Ahmed, "Mapping the World of a Scholar in Sixth/Twelfth Century Bukhara," *American Oriental Society* 120, 1 (January-March 2000), 24-43.

[116] BN-M, f. 171b.

[117] Ibid., f. 14b.

[118] Ibid., f. 44b.

[119] Ibid., f. 218a.

[120] Ibid., f. 169a.

vocally declaring the supremacy of Islam. Thus in the course of describing the military review held by his maternal uncle, the Mongol Mahmūd Khan of Tashkent in June, 1502, which he regarded as a great and somewhat inexplicable curiosity, he observes that "Just as Chingīz Khan legislated, the Mughuls observe Chingīz Khān's code (*tözuk*)."[121] This military review was, in fact, a completely Mongol event and its exotic quality may be the reason it is commemorated in one of the miniatures of the *Vaqā'i'* painted at Akbar's court around 1590. Known as the "Proclamation of the Yak-tail Standards," the miniature depicts what Bābur describes as a Mongol ceremony, whose significance he did not quite understand because he didn't know the language. The ceremony concluded as Mahmūd Khan and others threw *qumiz*, fermented mare's milk, toward the standards, after which the army cheered three times and then galloped around the standards.[122]

Bābur makes clear his own feelings about the relative importance of the Turco-Mongol and Islamic traditions when he writes about his reception by Tīmūrid cousins near Harat four years later:

> Previously our ancestors had shown unusual respect for the Chingīzid code (*törah*). They did not violate this code sitting and rising at councils and court, at feasts and dinners. [However] Chingīz Khan's code is not a *nass qāti'* (categorical text) that a person must follow. Whenever one leaves a good custom, it should be followed. If ancestors leave a bad custom, however it is necessary to substitute a good one.[123]

Bābur's phrase, *nass qāti'* or categorical text, is a synonym for the Quran, which for him—and also for Haydar Mīrzā—had displaced the Chingīzid code as the normative text, at least in moral and legal matters. Yet Tīmūrid legitimacy was still paramount, and Mongol military and social traditions endured.

While Bābur's fundamental faith is beyond question, the intensity of his religious feelings should not be exaggerated. From the evidence of his prose and verse he was a ritualistic, observant Muslim and not an unusually pious or evangelical one. Apart from

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[121] BN-M, f. 100b.

[122] BN-M, fs. 100a-b. The legitimizing significance of this Mongol ceremony is discussed by T. D. Skrynnikova, "Sülde—The Basic Idea of the Chinggis-Khan Cult," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 56, 1 (1992-93), 51-9.

[123] BN-M, f 186b.

describing the faith and practice of others, occasionally alluding to the performance of the daily prayers and quite rarely invoking or claiming god's blessing—usually during moments of extreme military crises—Bābur scarcely refers to Islam. He conveys deeply felt spirituality only when he speaks of his patron saint, the deceased Naqshbandī sufi *shaykh* Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār (d.1490). Like his father, though, Bābur accepted Islam as defining or at least legitimizing administrative and legal practices. As usual the evidence for this is much richer for Bābur than in Bābur's description of his father, but ʿUmar Shaykh's habit of wearing his turban rather than his Mongol cap at court is has its literary/legal parallel in Bābur's treatise, the *Mubaiyin*.

Written around 1521 in the form of a Turkī masnavī, the work was apparently intended as instruction for his son Humāyūn. The *Mubaiyin*'s first two and last two chapters are mainly theological essays on Muslim religious duties, but its third section, known as the *Kitāb al-zakāt,* discusses the principles and forms of taxation.[124] It is worth remembering that Bābur says he began studying *fiqh*, religious law, in Kabul with one Mullah Muhammad in June, 1519, and his own work may be the direct result of that tutorial. Bābur may have owed his detailed knowledge of Islamic law to these studies. At that time or during his youth in Ferghanah he evidently read the twelfth century Hanafī text, *Hidāyat*, by Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī's ancestor, Burhān al-Dīn ʿAlī Qilich Marghīnānī, a native of the Ferghanah valley.[125] Bābur knew of this work, which was, not so incidentally, a text studied in Delhi by the influential fourteenth century Indian Chishtī *pīr*, Nizām al-Dīn Auliyāʾ.[126] An interesting

[124] S. A. Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i Indii* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1977). See especially Chapter XII, "Babur's Taxation Policy." 137, *K Istorii Fergany Vtoroī Poloviny* XV v. (Tashkent: Akademii Nauk, 1957), 14-15, Nekotorye Ekonomicheskie Vzglyady Zakhir ad-Dina Muhammeda Babura, Izlozhennye v 'Mubaīine," *Trudy Dvadtsat' Pyatogo Mezhdunarodnovo Kongressa Vostokobedov* (Moskva: Vostochnoī Literatury, 1963), 203-08 and "Nekotorie Ekonomicheskie Vzglyadiʿ Zakhiriddina Muhammada Babura," *Iz Istorii Razvitiya Obshchesvenno-Ekonomicheskoī Mysli v Uzbekistane* v xv-xvi vv. (Tashkent: Izdatelʿstvo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoī CCP, 1960), 81-113, for the Turkī text of part III of the *Mubaiyin*. I am indebted to Maria Eva Subtelny for a copy of the latter text.

[125] Azimdzhanova discusses the similarity of Bābur's text to the *Hidāyat*. *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i Indii*, 149.

[126] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i Indii*, 149. Bābur refers to the *Hidāyat* in fs. 3a and 45a. The text became a respected guide to Sunni practice

feature of the text, or at least the Leningrad manuscript, is that Bābur concludes by mentioning that he is sending it to the "learned" of his homeland for their comments and corrections, one of many ways in which he reiterates the Central Asian locus of his intellectual, religious and political life.[127]

In section three of the *Kitab al-zakāt* Bābur discusses agricultural taxes and methods of land revenue collection as well as commercial taxes on merchants. He conducts his survey entirely within the context of Islamic norms, even making a distinction between merchants from Islamic and non-Islamic lands. No hint is given of non-Muslim Mongol or Turkic practices.[128] Even if many land and commercial revenue practices might have originated in pre-Islamic Iran, the legitimation of specific taxes by Muslim authors helps to explain why ʿUmar Shaykh and others thought of themselves as Muslim rulers when it came to governing and, like ʿUmar Shaykh, wore turbans when presiding at court, however petty that court might be. By writing the *Mubaiyin* Bābur confirms the evidence of his memoir that he saw Perso-Islamic sedentary agrarian and urban society as the norm, however much he enjoyed drinking with his Turco-Mongol companions.

Another sign of Bābur's commitment to the culture of Islam in the more general sense of the term as a civilization, is his repeated use of the phrase *akhlāq u atwār*, "morals and manners," in the Ferghanah section when evaluating the moral or just the personal qualities of an individual.[129] It is possible to make too much of his

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in Muslim India, so much so that British officials in late eighteenth century Bengal ordered it translated into English as an authoritative guide to Muslim "law." See Charles Hamilton trans., *The Hedaya, or Guide; a Commentary on the Mussulman Laws* (Lahore: New Book Co. repr. 1957). See Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in his Introduction to Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā's work, *Morals for the Heart* Bruce Lawrence ed. and trans. (New York, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 18 and n. 68.

[127] Azimdzhanova, "Nekotorie Vzglyadi' Zakhir ad-Dina Muhammeda Babura Izlozhennye v 'Mubaīine,'" 207.

[128] See for contrast the transition from Mongol to Perso-Islamic administration described by Ann K. S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), 185-220.

[129] Bābur frequently uses this phrase or its variant for his character sketches of Tīmūrids or members of the Turco-Mongol warrior/administrative class. His use of the phrase primarily in this first section may reflect the fact that it is the most carefully constructed, polished section of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. He does not include these sketches or use the phrase in his narrative for the years after 1506.

use of this phrase. Sometimes he simply prefaces a character sketch with these terms. On other occasions he uses them specifically when he discusses an individual's religious practices, as when he describes and implicitly praises his father's orthodox Hanafī belief and observance of the five daily prayers.[130] In yet other passages Bābur praises a person's *akhlāq u atwār* when he is describing a whole set of attributes that one might identify with the idealized Tīmūrid courtier, as when he praises one Sayyidim ʿAlī, one of Khusrau Shāh's former men, for his bravery, grace, conversation, and gatherings, despite the fact that his religious practices were somewhat suspect.[131] In Bābur's usage then the phrase seems to imply a standard for aristocratic civilized behavior, a code that includes but was not confined to Islamic belief or practice. Bābur had been directly exposed to literature that inculcated such virtues. One such man who wrote a treatise on *akhlāq* was the former *qāzī* of Harat and a court official of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Hasan bin Ghiyās al-Dīn al-Husaynī. This man visited Bābur in Kabul sometime after the Uzbek occupation of Harat in 1507. He held conversations with Bābur, to whom he rededicated his treatise titled: *Akhlāq-i Humāyūnī.*[132]

However, Bābur's Islamic heritage was far more complex than just these elements of a Sunni Muslim's education. Part of his religious upbringing and outlook was composed of his reverence for shaykhs of the Naqshbandī sufi order. His childhood tutor, Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī, himself exemplified just this typical religious mix of most Tīmūrids, whose apparently unreflective Sunni traditionalism was often animated by a deeply felt sense of spiritual relationship to a Naqshbandī *shaykh.* Like his religious tutor Bābur was a disciple of Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār, the most influential Naqshbandī shaykh of the second half of the Tīmūrid century.[133] A

[130] BN-M, f. 7a.

[131] BN-M, f. 192b. His chartacterization of Sayyidim ʿAlī and others inevitably calls to mind the sixteenth century Italian classic by Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (London: Penguin, repr. 1976).

[132] See Muzaffar Alam, "Akhlāqī Norms and Mughal Governance," in Muzaffar Alam et al, *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, 73-75.

[133] The Ahrārī Naqshbandī's were spiritual descendants of the fourteenth century Bukharan shaykh Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muhammad Naqshband (d. 1389). Khwājah Ahrār's great wealth and political influence with the Timurids is discussed and documented by O. D. Chekovich, *Samarkanskie Dokumenty xv-xvi vv.*

native of the Tashkent region Ahrār had become the spiritual teacher of the Tīmūrids and, after his death, the patron saint of Bābur and others. It would not have been difficult for either Bābur or his tutor to combine orthodox practice with discipleship to Ahrār, for this Naqshbandī shaykh practiced a restrained form of sufism characterized by close adherence to the *sharīʿah*, Islamic law, especially the example or *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad. The characteristic restraint of the order was represented by the absence of music or dance that was used to induce ecstatic states in some sufi orders such as the Chishtīya. Instead most Naqshbandīs of the fifteenth century at least practiced the "silent *dhikr*," rather than, for example, the vocal chanting of God's name.[134]

If the "silent *dhikr*" is usually seen as a signature spiritual trait of the fifteenth-century Naqshbandī order, its social and political equivalent ought to be Khwājah Ahrār's persistent involvement in political affairs of Tīmūrid Mawarannahr. Indeed, Ahrār himself was a not very well-educated Naqshbandī Shaykh whose guide to the goal of oneness with God deemphasized both seclusion and

(Moscow: Nauka, 1974). Jo-Ann Gross discusses Ahrār's religious persona in her dissertation "Khoja Ahrar: A Study of the Perceptions of Religious Power and Prestige in the Late Timurid Period," Ph.D. dissertation, N.Y. University, 1982. See also her article "Multiple Roles and Perceptions of a Sufi Shaikh: Symbolic Statements of Political and Religious Authority," in Marc Garborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone ed., *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul/Paris: Editions ISIS, 1990), 109-21 and Jürgen Paul, "Forming a Faction: The Himayāt System of Khwaja Ahrar," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (1991), 533-548. R. D. McChesney includes photographs of Ahrār's Samarqand tombstone and shrine in his book, *Central Asia, Foundations of Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1996), plates 19 & 20.

[134] The practice is discussed in many texts but for a recent summary based on primary sources see Jürgen Paul, *Doctrine and Organization. The Khwājagān/Naqshbandīya in the First Generation after Bahā'uddīn* (Berlin: ANOR, 1998), 18-30. See also the extended discussion of the scholarship on this practice by Isenbike Togan, "The Khasī, Jahrī controversy in Central Asia Revisted," in Elizabeth Özdalga ed., *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia (*Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1999), 17-45. There is now a rich literature on the Naqshbandiyyah *silsilah* in Central Asia and elsewhere. See among other works Jürgen Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Naqšbandiyya in Mittelasien im 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and N.Y.:W. de Gruyter, 1991), Fritz Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya* (Istanbul: Fritz Steiner Verlag, 1994) and Fritz Meier, *Meister und Schüler im Orden der Naqšbandiyya* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1995) and for the Indian history of the order see among other works Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet. The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, South Carolina: U. of South Carolina Press, 1998).

austere practices in favor of *suhbat*, communion with sufi masters and through such communion, the absorption of their spiritual power. Ahrār may have emphasized the effectiveness of this practice in which the disciple practices *rabita*, the concentration on the image of his *shaykh*, whether present, absent or deceased, in order to absorb his spiritual energy, because he was simply too busy with politics to supervise the practice of *dhikr*.[135] Whether he chose this method for this reason or because of his own rather rudimentary education he was an exceptionally worldy sūfī who accumulated vast landholdings in Mawarannahr during his lifetime, partly perhaps as a result of his constant involvement in the social and political conflicts of his day.[136] Ahrār's sons continued his political activities by supporting one Tīmūrid claimant or another in the internecine struggles of the late fifteenth-century. It was undoubtedly their close association with the Tīmūrids that led Uzbeks to kill one of them and two grandsons following Bābur's expulsion from Samarqand, although Uzbek rulers in the sixteenth century themselves patronized this family line of the Naqshbandī order.

In his memoirs Bābur never mentions that he participated in formal sufi ceremonies, although he must have known basic elements of fifteenth century Naqshbandī practice and perhaps even subtle aspects of Naqshbandī theology. Quite apart from his own teacher and many Tīmūrids and other Turco-Mongols of his circle who were Naqshbandī disciples, Bābur was intimately familiar with the poetry of the fifteenth century Persian-language writer, ʿAbd al-Rahman Jāmī, who articulated Naqshbandī doctrines in much of his work. Bābur mentions Jāmī with effusive respect in the section where he describes his visit to Harat in 1506.[137] Whatever his own knowledge of Naqshbandī theory and practice, twice in his memoirs Bābur recalls practicing what might be interpreted as a form of *suhbat*, in which he evokes Khwājah Ahrār's image and benefits from his spiritual power. The first time occurred before his second occupation of Samarqand in 1500, when he called forth Ahrār's image before seizing the city. On the second occasion in November

[135] Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 34-37 & 71-7.

[136] Much of this land was later converted into *waqf*, generally known as religious or charitable endowment. Some of these endowment documents have been edited and published by O. D. Chekovich, *Samarkandskie Dokumenty xv-xvi vv.*

[137] BN-M, f. 177b.

1528, Bābur versified a tract of Ahrār's in order to be cured of a severe illness. He uses, as he pointedly remarks, the meter of Jāmī's own religious poem, *Subhat'ul abrār*, the *Rosary of the Pious*.[138] Bābur writes that in comparison to the length of his earlier illnesses, on this occasion he was cured in record time.

One of the cities where Khwājah Ahrar acquired land holdings was Kabul, which he had converted into *waqf* endowments before his death in 1490 to support a mosque and madrasah and his own descendants.[139] As Ahrār is never known to have visited Kabul he may have acquired his holdings there at least partly through the influence of Bābur's Tīmūrid uncle, Ulugh Beg Kābulī. In his section on Kabul, most of which is missing, Bābur doesn't mention the Ahrārī Naqshbandī presence in the city. While the later history of this endowment is virtually undocumented it probably played an important role in the time of Bābur's son Humāyūn, and was very likely the original economic base of the family of Bāqī Billah Birang, the *murshid* or teacher of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī, the founder of the influential Indian branch of the order later known as the *Mujaddidī*.

Persian Wisdom Literature

If Bābur respected Chingīzid customs, accepted the Quran as the categorical text and revered Naqshbandī shaykhs, he also constantly invokes in his memoirs another kind of cultural authority, literature of Perso-Islamic poetry, which he mines as an inexhaustible source of aphorisms. He always quotes Persian poetry of the Islamic period when he wants to demonstrate a truism, irrefutably drive home an argument or legitimize a casual observation. As is true of most cultures pre-Islamic Iran produced its share of *andarz*

[138] BN-M, fs. 346a-b.

[139] For a translation and commentary on this *waqf* see Dale and Payind, "The Ahrārī Waqf of Kābul in the Year 1546 and the Mughūl Naqshbandiyyah," 218-33. Ahrārī descendants still enjoyed income from this endowment up to the time of the Soviet invasion in 1979. For a report on the Naqshbandiyyah in Afghanistan just before that invasion see Bo Utas, "The Naqshbandiyya of Afghanistan on the Eve of the 1978 Coup d'Etat," in Özdalga ed, *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, 117-27.

or wisdom literature, much of it attributed to Sasanid monarchs, and Iranian poets probably derived many of their pithy sayings from the general truths, moral maxims and advice of the Sasanian period.[140] Throughout the eastern Islamic world the aphorisms of Iranian-Muslim poets became popularly accepted truisms about life and politics, not categorical texts, not divinely sanctioned religious law, but truisms delivered by the most prestigious representatives of Perso-Islamic literary culture.

Bābur usually cites verses from the thirteenth century Iranian poet Saʿdī's two most popular works, the *Būstān,* "The Perfume Garden" and the *Gulistān,* "The Rose Garden." A typical example is when he cites a verse to punctuate his criticism of the merciful act of one of his longest serving *amīr*s, Q̱āsim Beg, who in 1507 had freed some Hazārah prisoners. "Mis-timed compassion" Bābur called it and cited a quatrain from the *Gulistān:*

To do good to the bad is one and the same
As the doing of ill to the good;
On brackish soil no spikenard grows,
Waste no seed of toil upon it.[141]

Elsewhere he quotes the *Gulistān* again for his presumably male, Turco-Mongol audience, perhaps with a wink and a nod, when describing one of Husayn Bāyqarā's wives. "A bad woman in a good man's house is like his hell in this world."[142] At other times he concludes arguments with a verse expressing sentiments of such universally accepted truth that they are difficult to identify. One such verse, "Wise men have said an illustrious reputation is a second life," he may have taken from Saʿdī, or just as likely from Firdausī's *Shāh nāmah*, which he mined as a source of aphorisms in the same way he exploited Saʿdī.[143]

[140] For a discussion of Sasanian wisdom literature see especially S. Shaked, "Andarz and Andarz Literature in Pre-Islamic Iran," EIr 2, 11-16, G.-H. Yūsofī, "Andarz Literature in New Persian," EIr 2, 16-24 and Ehsan Yarshater, "Iranian National History," CHR 3 (I) the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods, 399-400, and more briefly in J. T. P. De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 86-88, who discusses it as a/the source of Persian mystical didactic poetry.

[141] BN-M, f. 197a. This particular translation is that of Annette Beveridge, but with the order of her lines reversed to restore the original sequence. BN-B, p. 313.

[142] BN-M, f. 169a.

[143] BN-M, f. 185b.

In some instances Bābur may relate an incident with the purpose of demonstrating a well-known truism from Iranian literature that he might expect his audience to recognize. A possible example is the story that he tells about his father to illustrate ʿUmar Shaykh's repute as a just sultan. Using the Arabic-Islamic term *ʿadālat* once again Bābur writes:

> ʿUmar Shaykh was so just that when he heard of a caravan from China being lost in the snow of the mountains of eastern Andijan, and that only two of its thousand heads of houses escaped, he sent accountants to record all the caravan's goods, and even though no owners were present and he was in need, within a year or two summoned the heirs from Samarqand and Khurasan so that the goods were returned.[144]

Bābur's story bears a striking resemblance to one of Saʿdī's moral lessons, which also might be the source of the previous adage on kingship.

> When in your realm a merchant dies
> A base thing it is to touch his property,
> For later when lamenting they weep over him,
> Relatives and kin will relate to each other
> How a poor wretch died in a foreign clime,
> While a tyrant took the goods that he left....
> Many's a fair-name of fifty years standing
> That one foul name has trampled down."[145]

Did Bābur invent the story; probably not. Yet he may have thought of recording it because he recalled Saʿdī's moral. Bābur naturally fails to mention that his father had good economic reasons for his "just" actions, as his appanage straddled the strategic Ferghanah valley, one route for the coveted and taxable silk road.

The Tīmūrid Symposium

The various Turco-Mongol, Islamic and Persian strains in Bābur's cultural personality are most commonly on display in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*

[144] BN-M, fs. 7a-b.

[145] G. M. Wickens, *The Būstān of Saʿdī* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 29.

when he describes the principal communal institution of late-Tīmūrid social, political and cultural life. This was the gathering that he usually identified as *suhbat ve suhbatārāyalïq,* "conversation and camaraderie" or sometimes simply as *majlis* or "gathering." Readers of the *Vaqā'i'* come away from the text with the feeling that few things in life mattered more to Bābur than these social gatherings, which he repeatedly describes during his narration of the Kabul and Indian years. It is tempting to say he spoke with almost religious fervor about such gatherings in this phrase that echoed the Naqshbandī sufi *suhbat* or gatherings of adepts. Apart from the idiosyncratic Naqshbandī *suhbat,* the convivial gathering of the *suhbat ve subatārāyalïq* was one of three communal institutions of the period. The others were weekly gatherings in the congregational or Friday mosque and visits to the *hammām,* the communal or public bath. However, Bābur for all his Sunni orthodoxy never mentions attending Friday prayers in a congregational mosque, although he may commonly have done so, at least in Samarqand, Harat or Kabul. Nor does he ever recount any visits of his own to a *hammām*, except to recall sleeping off the effects of a drinking party one night in Kabul in October 1519.[146] Still the mosque and hammām were inevitable corollaries of Muslim public life, and after his victories in India he ordered the mosque and bath buildings in Kabul to be repaired. Yet it is the *suhbat ve suhbatārāyālïq* that is the leitmotif of Bābur's narrative and demonstrably the institution he valued most throughout his life.

Bābur experienced the most elegant of these gatherings in Harat, but the ones that he seemed to remember most fondly in later life were the innumerable informal drinking sessions that took place in and around Kabul, years before his successful invasion of India. He describes a typical gathering that began on October 30th, 1519 and continued for the next few days. This session was preceeded by what he describes as a little *suhbat* in Kabul for sixteen people on October 29th. Then Bābur and some of his men rode north from Kabul to the beautiful hillside village of Istalif to view the fall foliage. The first night it rained so hard the *beg*s and *ichki beg*s all crowded into Bābur's tent that had been erected on the edge of the *Bāgh-i Kalān*, the "Great Garden." The following day they enjoyed

[146] BN-M, f. 246b.

what Bābur identifies as a *chaghïr majlisi*, a wine-party or gathering. All drank throughout the day until the evening, resumed drinking the next morning with the so-called "morning draught," became drunk and then slept until the mid-day prayer. After waking they moved on to the nearby village of Bihzad where they appreciated the *khazan*, the lovely autumn foliage. Along the way they consumed some of the drugged confection *maʿjūn*, which they so often took during these gatherings. Then they drank again until the evening prayer in a gathering Bābur now refers to as a *suhbat*.[147]

His evocation of the gatherings where he and his compatriots ate, drank, recited poetry and listened to music recalls the *symposium* of pre-classical Greece, shorn of such Greek religious goals as communing with Dionysius. This symposium fulfilled multiple cultural, social and political functions: a center for transmission of traditional values, a place of organization for political action, a place of pleasure and a focus for the patronage of poetry and music.[148] Like the Greek symposium Bābur's gatherings were primarily aristocratic social events. In their emphasis on drinking and shared pleasure, in the frequent recital or spontaneous composition of poetry, in their common progression from quiet pleasure to raucous debauch, certain aspects of the *symposia* seem to describe precisely what "entertainments" meant to Bābur—and what, to his dismay, they often became.

> *Euphrosyne* ... expressed a state of delight produced by wine and by the pleasure of the occasion, generating the appropriate mood for constructive dialogue and the appreciation of poetry. [Although] Like other festivities, the ceremony of wine often transformed itself into an occasion for intemperance and excess. The image of the banquet interrupted by debauchery and violence was a frequent motif in myth and epic.[149]

Bābur's appreciation of communal meals, wine and poetry also seems analogous to Roman appreciation of dining with one's

[147] BN-M, f. 246b.

[148] Oswyn Murray, "Symposium" in Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth ed., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford and N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1461, and especially, Oswyn Murray, "Forms of Sociality," in Jean-Pierre Vernant ed., *The Greeks* Charles Lambert and Teresa Lavender Fagan trans. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 218-53.

[149] Massimo Vetta, "The Culture of the Symposium," in Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari ed., *Food, A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1999), 98 & 99.

friends, known to Cicero and others as *convivium*.[150] Bābur would have appreciated what Plutarch said, "We do not sit at table only to eat, but to eat together."[151] The seventeenth century Sunni Muslim Pashtu poet, Khushāl Khan Khattak, similarly observed:

What one consumes in solitude,
Will fill the gut and nothing else;
What one consumes in company,
And sociably, is the true feast.[152]

From a political perspective the *suhbat ve subatārāyalïq* was the only institution that regularly brought together members of the aristocratic elite, forming close ties of friendship and loyalty in a society where even kinship bonds were notoriously fragile and unreliable. These gatherings also functioned as a kind of parliament, where important political questions were discussed and decisions taken. When offering his son Humāyūn some of his probably unwelcome political advice in 1528, Bābur pointedly told him that he, Bābur, had gained the trust of his longtime companion and supporter, Khwājah Kalan through *ikhtilāt*, social intercourse.[153] A few pages later he is writing to Khwājah Kalān himself, then in Kabul, nostalgically recalling that "conversation and wine are pleasant with *hamsuhbat*, "comrades" and *hamkāsah*, "boon companions."[154] Bābur's explicit use of such social gatherings as forums for political bonding is also exemplified by way he describes his invitation to a recently cowed Afghān commander in 1526. Bābur pointedly remarks that he invited this man, Fath Khan Sherwānī, to a *majlis* to share wine, where he also "distinguished" (*sarafrāz*) the Afghān with a gift of a turban and some of his own clothes.[155] Neither of these acts was original with Bābur; shared meals and clothes were a well-

[150] Mirielle Corbier, "The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome," in Flandrin and Montanari ed., *Food, A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, 136, and Katharine M. D. Dunbabin, "Ut Greaco More Biberetur: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch," in Inge and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen, *Meals in a Social Context, Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Oxford: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 81-101.

[151] Massimo Montanari, "Food Systems and Models of Civilization," in Flandrin and Montanari ed., *Food, A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, 69.

[152] Mackenzie, *Divan of Khushāl Khan Khattak*, 116.

[153] BN-M, fs. 349b-350a..

[154] BN-M, f. 361.

[155] BN-M, f. 303.

established Middle Eastern/Islamic form of royal recognition. Never mind that neither of these rituals was ultimately successful in winning this Afghān's loyalty.

Whether these symposia had an immediate political purpose or were simply part of the daily social and cultural ritual of aristocratic life, they were usually held in natural settings or urban garden pavilions, the carefully constructed formal reorderings of nature. The aesthetics of these settings seem to have been as important to Bābur as the drinking and literary rituals of the *suhbat*, and throughout the text he expresses unfeigned delight at the beautiful gardens he remembered from Ferghanah and Samarqand, and the entrancing mountain scenery of the Kabul region. It is symptomatic of the importance that natural beauty or these garden replicas had for him that he spends more narrative energy on describing their attractions than on any other subject except military and political affairs. The first building he ever ordered to be constructed was apparently a garden portico built near Ush in the southeastern Ferghanah valley in 1496-97, when he was no more than fourteen. His description of this building is included within a longer passage in which he displays an aesthetic sense that was an acquired trait of Tīmūrid culture—a sensitivity to the appeal of dramatic perspective and the beauty of the natural landscape.[156] It is also typical of Bābur that he used the occasion in an autobiographical way to trumpet the superiority of his own site selection when compared with an earlier building erected by his Mongol uncle, Sultān Mahmūd Khan—who later, of course, he shows to be an indifferent literary scholar and ineffectual military leader. Ush, Bābur writes,

> Has a good climate, abundant running water and a fine spring. There are many sayings about Ush's virtues. Southeast of the walled town is found a symmetrical mountain named Barā Kuh. At this mountain's summit Sultān Mahmūd Khan built a courtyard. Further down this mountain's crest I built a porticoed courtyard in 1496-97.

[156] Bābur and the Tīmūrids were not significantly different in this respect from the Chinese appreciation for natural beauty and the dramatic prospect, or that perhaps, of most human beings. For an introduction to Chinese aesthetics of nature and art see among other numerous sources the works of James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982) and *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty,* 1368-1580 (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978).

> Although [his] courtyard sits at such a height mine is better located for the entire town and suburbs are at its foot. Andijan's river runs through the midst of the Ush districts to Andijan. On both sides are gardens, all of which overlook the river. The violets there are fine. There are many streams and in the spring it is very nice; tulips and roses bloom profusely.[157]

It is also indicative the relative importance these settings had for him that following his occupation of Kabul in 1504 and again after taking India in 1526 he never mentions visiting or constructing a mosque or a madrasah, but takes page after page lovingly to describe the construction of new gardens. In 1508-09 he ordered the construction of a *Chahār-Bāgh* [Chār-Bāgh] in the warm Adinahpur temperate zone east of Kabul.[158] Then immediately after his victory in India he rode out around Agra looking for a suitable location to build new *chahār-bāgh*s or symmetrically ordered formal four-part gardens, intersected with waterways and planted with flowers, fruit trees and aromatic plants.

Such gardens were not, of course, unique to Tīmūrid Mawarannahr, although the *chahār-bāgh* may have been refined more completely at that period.[159] Aristocratic pleasure gardens were constructed throughout the Islamic Middle East and Muslim Spain, where some of the most famous examples of garden architecture are known to have been built. An example of a private garden in eleventh-century Cordoba sets the mood that Bābur often evoked when describing his favorite haunts, although he would not have approved of the zigzagging stream.

> Its courtyard is of pure white marble; a stream [*jadwal]* traverses it, wriggling like a snake. There is also a basin into which all waters fall. The roof [of the pavilion] is decorated with gold and blue and in these colours also are decorated the sides and various parts. The garden [*rawd*] has files of trees symmetrically aligned and its flowers smile from open buds. The foliage of the garden prevents the sun seeing the ground; and the breeze, blowing day and night over the garden, is loaded with scents... Abū ʿAmir [Ibn Shuhayd] enjoyed therein spells of well-being and rest both in the morning and afternoon. Fate gave him at that time whatsoever he desired, and the

[157] BN-M, f. 3a.

[158] BN-M, f. 132a.

[159] See Maria Eva Subtelny. "Agriculture And The Timurid *Chahārbāgh*: The Evidence From a Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual," in Attilio Petruccioli ed., *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 110-128.

> pleasures of sobriety and inebriation alternated with each other in his experience. He and the proprietor of the garden who is buried alongside him were companions in the youthful pursuit of the gratification of the sense and allies in joy.[160]

The cultivated society of al-Andalus in the tenth and eleventh century has been described almost as if Bābur were praising the gatherings of his refined cousins in Tīmūrid Harat, as a "brilliant period of like-minded laity, minded to poetry...congregating together in garden symposia."[161]

Bābur was in fact heir to the garden tradition of Tīmūr and his successors, most of whom lived neither on the steppe nor in city fortresses but in suburban gardens. Sultān Husayn Bāyqarā presided over the culmination of this tradition in late fifteenth century Harat, most notably in his Bāgh-i Jahān Arāy or World-Adorning Garden that was built over a quarter of a century. Probably modeled on one of Tīmūr's own gardens, the *Bāgh-i Jahān Arāy* functioned both as the center of government and the preferred scene of drinking parties and assemblies of all kinds. The garden, indeed, played such an important role in Tīmūrid life that it has been endowed by modern scholars with an almost mythic significance, that it may even possibly have had for some of its more reflective denizens.[162] It is certainly true that "It would be erroneous to view Bābur's importation of the Tīmūrid garden concept into the subcontinent... as simply a romantic yearning for the past," but whether or not he explicitly thought of the Tīmūrid gardens he built in Agra and the surrounding region "as an embodiment of

[160] D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 200), 131. See also James Dickie, "The Hispano-Arabic Garden: Its Philosophy and Function," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31 (1968), Pt. 2, 237-48. See especially p. 238 where the author argues for a Buddhist symbolic origin of the design the original Iranian *chahār bāgh* and an Iranian origin for the Arab and therefore also the Hispano-Arabic four-part garden.

[161] Fairchild-Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*, 166.

[162] See for example Thomas W. Lentz's erudite and suggestive essay, "Memory and Ideology in the Timurid Garden," in James L. Westcoat, Jr. and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn ed., *Mughal Gardens* Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 31-57. For a cautionary note about attributing metaphysical significance to "Islamic" gardens see Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture," in Attilio Petruccioli ed., *Gardens in the Time of The Great Muslim Empires*, 32-72.

Tīmūrid rule, traditions and memory," is another question that can only be surmised. What seems lost in this dichotomy is the significance of these gardens as manifestations of a culturally programmed aesthetic sense that was also reflected in the innumerable miniature paintings that depict garden pavilions, which in turn perpetuated the aesthetic. What is certain is that in physical terms Bābur's eventual conquest of India came to be expressed hardly at all in religious monuments but pervasively as the imperialism of landscape architecture, the civilized ideal of the late Tīmūrid period. Within those aesthetically pleasing spaces he and his *beg*s conducted the symposia of pleasure, poetry and government.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PĀDSHĀH OF KABUL

Eleven or twelve languages are spoken in Kabul province: Arabī, Fārsī, Turkī, Mughulī, Hindī, Afghānī, Pashāī, Parājī. Gabarī, Lamghānī, Barakī. It is not known whether in any other province there are such different people and diverse tongues.[1]

Bābur on Kabul

By occupying Kabul in September 1504 Bābur ended his latest *qazaqlïq* phase, which also turned out to be his last stateless period. He retained control of the city throughout the remainder of his life. Even if the city was a "trifling place,"[2] and entire Kabul *vilāyat*, a "negligible" province, it initially offered him a measure of protection from Uzbek attacks.[3] The province was, he writes "secure... difficult for foreign enemies to penetrate."[4] As he points out snow usually made all but one of the Hindu Kush passes impassable for four to five months during the winter, and after the melt-off began in April flooded rivers in the narrow mountain valleys prevented large forces from crossing the mountains for an additional two to three months.[5] Kabul could only be attacked easily from the west

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[1] BN-M, f. 131b. Apart from the six first readily recognizable languages, the others such as Pashāī and Parājī are either dialects of Persian or other Iranian languages. See Georg Morgenstierne, "Afghanistan," "Languages," EIr I, 501-25 and Morgenstierne, *Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages* (Oslo: H. Ashehoug, 1929-). Pashāī is usually classified as a "Dardic" language, linguistically similar to Kashmīrī. See also D. I. Edelman, Y*azyki Mira*, *Dardskie i Nuristanskie Yazyki* (Moskva: "Indrik," 1999), 72-80.

[2] BN-M, fs. 128a & 144b. Bābur was apparently writing this part of the *Vaqā'i'* between January 1527 and June 1529. At least f. 173b was written at that time. See Annette Beveridge's note, BN-B, p. 276, n. 7.

[3] BN-M, fs. 144b and 128b. In his words the city was *mūqir* and the province, *mukhtasar*.

[4] BN-M, f. 130a.

[5] BN-M, f. 130b. See Bābur's description of these northern passes. Prior to the construction of the Salang tunnel in 1964 only the Shibar or Shibartu pass could

along the Harat-Qandahar road which was relatively flat and easily traversed even in winter, but in 1504 the last major Tīmūrid ruler, Sultān Husayn Bayqara, still controlled Harat and through his sons, much of Khurasan.

Still, in 1504 it was hardly a forgone conclusion that Bābur would survive in Kabul. He commanded few reliable troops, including, of course, his own untrustworthy brothers and relatives. Nor did he have any funds. Not only was Shībānī Khan poised to resume his attacks on the last bastions of Tīmūrid power in the spring, but Kabul province itself was a difficult territory to rule. It was home to an unstable medley of disparate ethnic and social groups—Afghāns, Turks, Mongols, Arabs, Iranians—some of whom were nomads, many of whom were peasants, with merchants moving carefully among them in armed caravans. Most Afghān tribes were either autonomous or completely independent; many remote agricultural villages were unpacified and paid no revenue. Unlike Andijan where everyone knew Turkī, the population of this region spoke "eleven or twelve languages."[6] As for his realistic characterization of the resources of the city and province, Bābur was probably implicitly telling his readers that unlike the great Tīmūrid cities of Samarqand and Harat, Kabul did not possess a sufficient agricultural hinterland to support a populous urban center, although it was a major trade emporium between India, Iran and Mawarannahr.

Yet despite the myriad difficulties he faced, Bābur gradually consolidated his authority in Kabul. His narrative of events for the next five years, when the memoir abruptly breaks off for a decade, contains a remarkable, uniquely candid description of the fundamental problems involved in ruling Kabul and eastern Afghanistan. It is not only the earliest extant account of this region, but also one that seems uncannily familiar to anyone who knows its later history. Initially Bābur attempted to use the city as a base to defend Tīmūrid power south of the Amu Darya and then to resuscitate a state in Mawarannahr. By 1512 he failed to achieve either goal and

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usually be crossed in the winter. It is reached via Charikar and the Ghurband valley and eventually leads into Bamian. Birthe Frederiksen describes and maps the route in her book *Caravans and Trade in Afghanistan* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 112-114. For a description of the crossing of the Hindu Kush in May 1832 see Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, II, 147-78.

[6] BN-M, f. 131b.

Kabul then became of necessity a staging ground for his South Asian Tīmūrid renaissance.

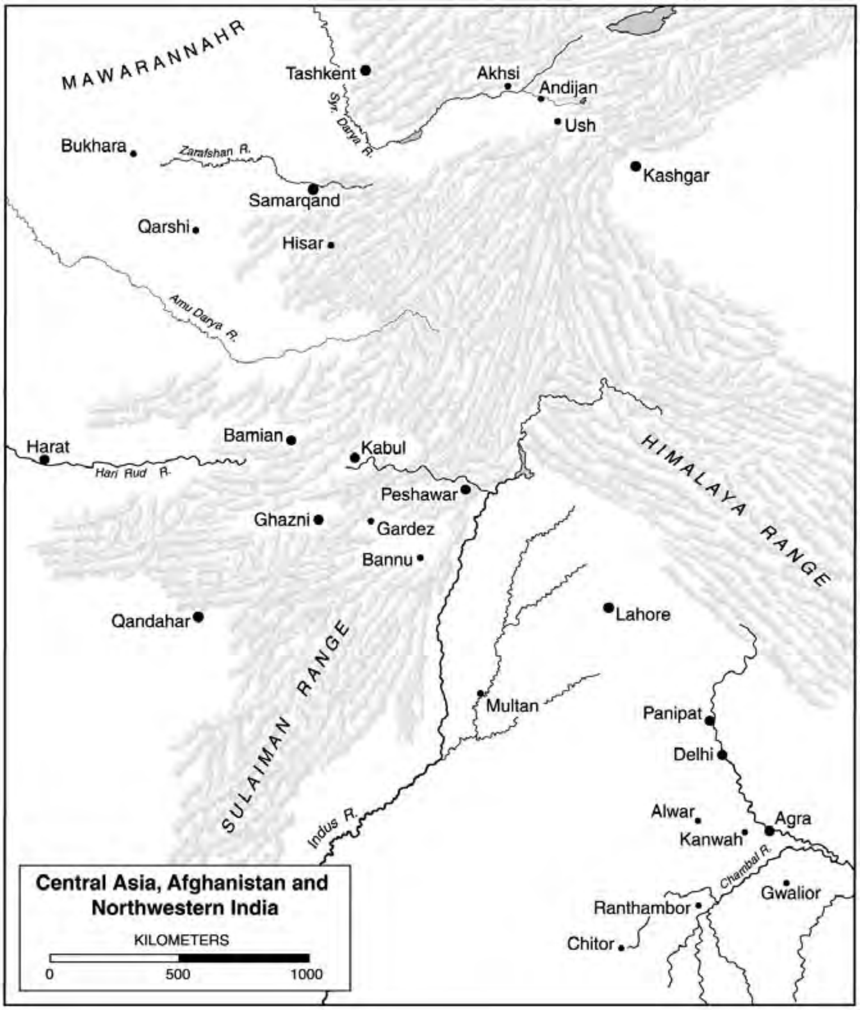
State Formation in Kabul

In September 1504 Bābur immediately began working to secure his position in the city and province of Kabul. Kabul was, as he carefully explains in his gazetteer, a *vilāyat* or province that included fourteen *tuman*s, a Mongol term for 10,000 fighting men, but in late Tīmūrid times a word commonly used to refer to a subdivision of a *vilāyat* or a district. As a further explanation for his readers he notes, inter alia, that the word *tuman* is used in Samarqand and Bukhara but that in Andijan and Kashghar the Turkī term *orchin* is employed, while in India districts are called by the Persian term, *parghanah*. In his descriptions of some subdivisions of Kabul he also uses the Turkic term *buluk*, evidently to refer to a territorial unit smaller than a *tuman*, but not exactly a subdistrict of every *tuman*.[7]

As for the Kabul *vilāyat*. He describes it as extending on the east to Lamghanat [Laghman], Pareshawer [Peshawar] and "some Indian provinces," on the west to *Kuhistan*, literally the mountainous regions, including Ghur, where the Mongol-speaking Hazārahs and Nikdirī lived, then on the northern side of the Hindu Kush mountains to Andarab and Qunduz provinces, and on the south to Farmul, Bannu, Naghar and "Afghanistan." By Afghanistan Bābur evidently meant the region of the Sulaiman mountains southeast of Kabul and not Qandahar, which was the first capital of the Pashtūn Durrānī state in 1747. He doesn't appear to be absolutely consistent when he distinguishes the Kabul *vilāyat* from the provinces around it such as Lamghanat and Ghazni, unless he is using the term itself in subtly distinct ways. The confusion may stem from the simple fact that as Bābur himself points out, certain areas like Ghazni were sometimes identified as a *vilāyat*, and sometimes as a *tuman*.[8]

[7] Thus Bābur identifies the village of Chaghan-sarai, at the entrance to Kafiristan, as a *buluk*., but not as part of a *tuman*. BN-M, f. 134b.

[8] BN-M, f. 137b. In his initial description of the Kabul *vilāyat* Bābur equates Lamghanat on the east with Qunduz to the north of the Hindu Kush. That is,



Map no. 3. Mawarannahr, Afghanistan and Northwest India

Thus, Bābur reports that he allotted the Kabul *vilāyat* to his brothers and certain "guest-begs," saying that Jahāngīr Mīrzā received Ghazni while Nāsir Mīrzā was assigned certain *tumans* which he includes in the Lamghanat *vilāyat*. He mentions that although he gave his old Andijanis *tiyūls* or land grants, he assigned nothing at all from "my own province," implying that he kept all of Kabul *vilāyat* as demesne land, which is consistent with his later statements and those of his daughter, Gulbadan Begim, not surprising, of course, since, as she herself notes her information was based on her father's autobiography![9] Adding to the confusion is the fact that Bābur does not include a Kabul *tuman* in his list of fourteen districts in Kabul province. Yet he does specifically list a number of villages "dependencies" of Kabul which may have comprised Kabul *tuman*. These included his favorite picnic grounds at Istalif, about twenty miles to the north and Pamghan [Paghman], nearly fifteen miles to the northwest. After he arrived in Kabul he assigned Pamghan, "the best place in Kabul," to Shāh Begim, a wife of his grandfather Yūnas Khan.[10] Yet whatever confusion may exist about the exact boundaries and subdivisions of Kabul province there is no doubt about the significance of the city in Bābur's life. Not only was it the basis of his Indian empire, but nearly all his children were born there and he loved the city and its nearby gardens.[11]

Initially Bābur's goal of securing his new base was made difficult by the necessity of providing for his brothers, followers and allies. He alienated a considerable amount of revenue by parceling out territory to his brothers, the "guest-*beg*s," an apparent reference to Bāqī Chaghāniāni and his followers, to his old Andijānī companions and then his close relatives. Bāqī Chaghāniānī alone received control over Kabul's *tamgha* or customs duties, the city's main revenue source, as well as being appointed as *darughah*, the chief administrator of the city and Bābur's own deputy as the "Lord of

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he seems to mean that Lamghanat, like Qunduz, is not included in the Kabul *vilāyat*, but is on its boundary. Bābur identifies Lamghanat as a *vilāyat* and not as a *tuman*. He also says that Ghazni was in the "third clime," while Kabul *vilāyat* was in the fourth.

[9] See Annette Beveridge's comments, *The Bābur-nāma in English*, 227 n. 5.

[10] BN-M, f. 200b.

[11] Gulbadan Begim, *Humāyūn-Nāma*, f. 40b.

the Gate."[12] Bābur probably had little choice but to appoint him in the fall of 1504, as most of his men had originally come from Khusrau Shāh, although Bābur dismissed Bāqī Chaghāniānī the following year.[13] Thus his financial situation in the autumn of 1504 must have been desperate. His most immediate task was simply to feed the families of the tribes who had come south with him from Samarqand, Hisar and Qunduz and the thousands of Khusrau Shāh's men who had joined him just a few weeks earlier. Compared to the rich pastures of Ferghanah and northern Afghanistan, the bare mountains and narrow valleys around Kabul could not easily support large numbers of pastoral nomads or supply a sufficient agricultural surplus for a large émigré population.

In the late fall Bābur fed these tribes by stripping thirty-thousand donkey loads of grain from Kabul and Ghazni provinces. He also imposed a tribute of horses and sheep on the Sultān-Masʿūdī Hazārahs.[14] Writing in the relative security of Agra two decades later Bābur expressed embarrassment at these early, desperate efforts to sustain himself. He says that the amount of Kabul's harvest "was not known,"[15] and that the province was devastated by this collection, an astonishing admission for a ruler at this period, one he may include as another lesson for his son and heir Humāyūn. He makes a similar admission about a levy of grain he took from people of the Kahraj valley in eastern Afghanistan in 1519, reporting that in consequence these "rustic mountain folk ...were ruined."[16]

State formation, a grandiose-sounding abstraction, was a messy, violent business in sixteenth century Afghanistan, just as it was to be after the formation of the first Afghān state in 1747 or again in the last decade of the twentieth century after the Soviets destroyed the state that had taken more than two centuries to evolve. Ulugh Beg Kābulī had reigned in Kabul until 1502, but based upon the evidence of Bābur's narrative his uncle directly controlled only a small percentage of the Kabul *vilāyat*, perhaps only a corridor that

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[12] BN-M, fs. 159a-b. Beatrice Manz describes the nature of the *darughah* in Tīmūr's day. *The rise and rule of Tamerlane*, 170.

[13] BN-M, f. 159b.

[14] BN-M, f. 144b.

[15] BN-M, f. 144b.

[16] BN-M, f. 219b.

stretched from Ghazni in the southwest to Ningnahar in the east—Husayn Bayqara or his supporters still held the valuable city and district of Harat as well as the important city of Qandahar and much of Khurasan. Independent Pashtūn, Hazārah and Mongol tribes controlled most of the remaining territory in the mountainous regions of eastern and central Afghanistan. Ulugh Beg and Bābur faced the same situation that sharply restricted the authority of the early nineteenth century Afghān ruler, Ahmad Shāh Durānī in and around Kabul. Ahmad Shāh's political choices were succinctly described by the British-Indian official Mountstuart Elphinstone. Writing about the situation in 1809, Elphinstone observed that Ahmad Shāh's authority was limited to the plains around the towns, the areas inhabited by Tajiks or Iranians and the non-Afghan—that is Indian—provinces. He went on to remark that "an ordinary monarch might endeavor to reduce the tribes to obedience by force; but one Afghaun king [Ahmad Shāh Durrānī] has already had the penetration to discover that it would require a less exertion to conquer all the neighbouring kingdoms, than to subdue his own countrymen."[17] That was Bābur's solution too when later he successfully invaded India.

Based upon later knowledge Bābur reports that the total income of Kabul province from agriculture, nomads and trade,—*vilāyat, sahrā nishīn* and *tamgha*—was 800,000 shahrukhīs.[18] He spells out various types and rates of taxes, or *zakat,* in the fiscal section of his 1521 text the *Mubaiyin*, although no records exist to show the extent to which these taxes were systematically imposed or successfully collected. Most of these taxes, which are identified in Arabic terminology, reflected standard practice and apparently reflected Bābur's knowledge of Burhān al-Dīn al-Marginānī's text, the *Hidāyat.*[19] There were, Bābur indicates, three categories of taxes: from land, trade and domesticated animals. Land or agricultural taxes were of two kinds: *ʿushr* and *kharāj*, the first levied principally from gardens and/or fruit trees and the second, by implication, from fields producing grain of various kinds. The *kharāj* was in turn

[17] Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and Its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India* (Delhi: Munshiram, repr. 1998), 173 & 176.

[18] BN-M, f. 140a. *Vilāyat* here evidently refers to agricultural land.

[19] See Book I: "Of Zakat," in which the author discusses taxes on domestic animals, precious coins, agriculture etc. Hamilton, *The Hedaya*, 1-25.

divided into two categories, one a fixed tax on the harvest itself of one-third to one-half, and the second based on the actual measurement of the land. Land that produced two harvests was to be taxed twice. The second category of taxes, *savā'im* literally, flocks, dealt with domestic animals, including camels and horses as well as sheep, goats and cattle. Based upon the age of animals and the amount of time in pasture, this tax was collected in kind, for example, one sheep from flocks between forty and 120, two from flocks of 120 to 200 etc. The third category of taxes was levied from trade of two types: commercial activities in bāzārs levied in cash and external or long-distance trade arriving in and/or passing through the city. Bāzār merchants were taxed at the rate of approximately 5% of gold coins and 2.5% of silver coins of cash-on-hand. Taxes on external trade varied according to whether merchants came from "friendly," that is Muslim countries, in which case they were taxed at the rate of 5%; others could be taxed at double this rate.[20]

A large proportion of the total revenue Bābur extracted from Kabul probably came from commerce. Agriculture in the province was not very productive and many remote villages paid no taxes at all.[21] As for the tribes in the region, many simply ignored the Kabul government as they continued to do during the remainder of the millennium. However, Kabul lay astride the principal trade route between India and Central Asia, as well as also participating in commerce between India and "Khurasan," that is western Afghanistan and northeastern Iran.

> On the land route between Hindustan and Khurasan there are two trading towns. One is Kabul; another is Qandahar. Caravans come to Kabul from Ferghanah, Turkistan, Samarqand, Bukhara, Balkh, Hisar and Badakhshan. From Khurasan they go to Qandahar. As the midpoint between Hindustan and Khurasan Kabul is an excellent mercantile center. If merchants went to China or Rum they would make just such a profit. Every year seven, eight or ten thousand horses come to Kabul. Below from Hindustan come ten, fifteen, twenty thousand caravans of heads of families bringing slaves, cotton cloth, refined and unrefined sugar and aromatic roots. Many merchants are not satisfied with 300 or 400 percent profit.[22]

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[20] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii.* See especially Chapter XII, "The Taxation Policies of Babur."
[21] BN-M, fs. 129b, 134a-b & 135b.
[22] BN-M, f. 129a.

Apart from the useful information about trade patterns: Central Asian horses going to India in exchange for slaves, cloth, sugar and medicinal herbs, Bābur's commercial data indicates why it was so important for Kabul rulers to keep the roads open, that is to say, the tribes under control.[23]

Much of Bābur's history of his Kabul years is devoted to describing *chapquns* on tribes. As he makes clear the *chapqun* usually had a dual purpose, pacification and plunder. These raids might secure crucial roads and depending on the tribe, they produced income and supplies. If repeated often enough, the raids enabled him to transform simple robbery into organized state theft—taxation. Such raids were a well-established Central Asian tribal institution, and sometimes many years of successful *chapquns* led to full-scale pastoral nomadic empires.[24] The first one Bābur describes took place in the desperate days in the fall of 1504, and apparently when winter was coming on. He tried to collect what he describes as a large tribute of sheep and horses from the Sultān-Masʿūdī Hazārahs. He reports that the Hazārahs, who had been raiding the roads near Ghazni, refused to pay tribute, and he concedes that the subsequent raid on this tribe did not, as he discreetly phrases it, "turn out as wished."[25] His vague, euphemistic description of the *chapqun* is probably not completely due to its failure. Successful or not when Bābur took part in events he describes them in great detail with few generalizations. In this case he stayed behind in Kabul. As he is careful to state with his usual precision later in the text, he himself did not go on a raid until the following winter, an event he describes in the first person, singular and plural.[26]

[23] This well-established commerce is described by Stephen F. Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade*, 1600-1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Scott C. Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade* 1550-1900 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[24] From the Turkic root *chap-* which Gerhard Clauson characterizes as "an onomatopoeic verb...with several meanings...the only connecting link between which seems to be that they all describe noisy action." *Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 394. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was used in both Ottoman and Chaghatay Turkish in the sense of raid or plunder.

[25] BN-M, fs. 144b-145a.

[26] BN-M, f. 161b. Bābur uses the passive tense to describe the first raid, i.e. the Hazārahs were attacked. He does not say "I" rode or "we" attacked which he commonly does when describing other raids.

The 1504 raid represented the first, tentative step in Bābur's state-building process, and it produced far more sheep than submissive Afghān followers. Nonetheless he needed to feed his men and gain control over the main roads, so slightly more than a year after the *chapqun* near Ghazni he personally led a raid on the Turkmān Hazārahs, north-northwest of Kabul. Citing the highway robbery of these Hazārahs in an area northwest of Charikar, where they may have threatened the crucial road leading north to Badakhshan, Bābur and his men attacked an Hazārah encampment in a narrow, mountain valley, almost impassable due to the deep snow. After losing a few of his men who recklessly exposed themselves to Hazārah arrows without armor, Bābur's more heavily armed force drove the Hazārahs back into hills. The Hazārah women and children also fled, leaving their camp to Bābur and his men. After fruitless attempts to pursue the Hazārahs in the deep snow the Tīmūrids camped overnight in captured Hazārah tents and headed back the next day.

This seems to have been a modestly successful raid, netting both animals and dead Afghāns. Bābur remarks that he himself collected four or five hundred sheep and twenty-five horses, although he doesn't say if he was able to drive the animals out of the single, narrow path that led out of the snow-covered valley. He does recall that his men smoked out and killed seventy or eighty Hazārahs camped in a cave just outside the valley.[27] Yet while the raid might have temporarily cowed these particular Hazārahs, it did not produce lasting political results. That would have required far greater resources than Bābur possessed in 1506 or at almost any subsequent period of his life.

Interspersed between these two brief raids Bābur led his men on two campaigns, which in each case he describes as a *yurush*, an expedition, one originally undertaken to Hindustan in January 1505 and another to attack the nearby fortress of Qalat in the late summer or early fall of the same year. Bābur often uses *yurush* to indicate a prolonged campaign undertaken for specific military objectives, but while the January campaign lasted for more than four months its purpose was not an invasion of India but plunder. His young cousin Haydar Mīrzā, who joined him in Kabul about

[27] BN-M, fs. 160-62a.

four years later, writes that Bābur launched the campaign because Kabul could not support Khusrau Shāh's "20,000 men" who had joined him earlier.[28] He also notes that this particular expedition was, as Bābur implicitly makes clear by his narrative, a disaster. India was probably chosen over districts near Kabul, which he and his men also debated, because January was the perfect time to campaign in the subcontinent. The Tīmūrids could leave behind the bitterly cold, snowy terrain of Kabul and Ghazni for the pleasant, sunny weather of the Indus plains. In fact Bābur and his men never crossed the Indus in 1505 because Bāqī Chaghāniānī suggested they "raid" Kuhat in Bangash district, located south of Peshāwar on the west bank of the Indus, where informants said they would find many herds. The *yurush*, indeed, turned into a series of vicious *chapquns* on Afghāns in Bangash and nearby Bannu and Dasht districts. These attacks produced a certain amount of plunder in the form of cattle, grain and cloth, but eventually led to a massive loss of horses and transport animals.

Afghāns who resisted being plundered were slaughtered by Bābur's better armed horsemen. Afghān villagers nearly always fought on foot and were easy targets when they chose to resist or challenge mounted men in the open. As the Tīmūrids left Kuhat with their plunder riding due west up the Hangu road, they killed or captured more than 150 Afghāns who evidently had come out from the pillaged town to shout at the Tīmūrids from the hillsides. The heads of those killed were brought to camp, others were captured, brought to the camp and beheaded. All the heads were piled into a "minaret" of skulls. Both Chingīz Khan and Tīmūr had marked their victories with these grisly mementos. Clavijo describes one of them in northern Iran, where "Outside Dāmghān at a distance of a bowshot we noticed two towers, built as tall as a height to which one might cast up a stone, which were entirely constructed of mens' skulls set in clay."[29] Bābur, though, never mentions building such minarets during his struggles in Tīmūrid Mawarannahr, despite many allusions to beheading of captives. Like his ancestors he evidently reserved the tactic to terrorize foreigners.

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[28] TR-T, f. 97b.
[29] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane* 1403-1406, 173.

The next day another minaret was built of the heads of about 100 "rebellious" Afghāns near Hangu, who dared challenge the Tīmūrids from behind a *sangar*, a stone fortification. After having to leave behind most of the recently stolen cattle in the rugged, narrow road leading to Bannu, Bābur dispatched Jahāngīr Mīrzā to deal with another small group of Afghāns defending a mountain *sangar*. He quickly overran the small stone fortification, killed and beheaded its defenders, seized some fine textiles he found there and left behind another human minaret. These brutal raids and pointed mementos about the cost of resistance did persuade some local Afghāns to offer submission to Bābur's troops, and thus could be said to mark a tentative expansion of Tīmūrid power in the area.[30]

Bābur says that he and his men originally had planned to return to Kabul after raiding Bannu, but they changed plans when someone said that the nearby plain was populated and the roads were good. In the ad hoc fashion that characterized nearly every aspect of this misnamed *yurush,* they abruptly postponed their return and decided to raid the plain to the south. Pursuing the fleeing population into the hills just west of the Indus they seized a few more animals and textiles before fighting off an attack of the Isa Khel Afghāns. Moving further south they attacked a few more villages and plundered and murdered some prominent Afghān merchants, seizing characteristic items of commerce that were traded between India and Afghanistan and Marwarannahr: sugar, textiles, horses and "aromatic roots," the latter either medicinal herbs destined for Afghanistan and Mawarannahr or the pungent asafoetida root coveted in South Asia. By now it was early March, ʿĪd al-Fitr on the Islamic calendar and nearly Nau Rūz, the Iranian solar new year, and Bābur proudly reports that on the banks of the swollen Gumal river he composed a *ghazal*, a lyric poem, cleverly commemorating the conjunction of the two festivals.[31]

Then after much ill-informed debate about the best road back to

[30] For a better understanding of Afghan tactics, which seem to have been unchanged in the late nineteenth century, see H. D. Hutchinson, *The Campaign in Tirah*, 1897-98 (London: MacMillan, 1898), especially chapter 5, the photograph on p. 550 and the map on p. 70.

[31] BN-M, f. 150a. As he often does Bābur quotes only a few lines of this poem. The entire verse is found in his *dīwān*, his collected literary works. The poem is discussed below in chapter 5.

Kabul he and his men decided to avoid the difficult Gumal pass, where the spring snow-melt made the river almost impassable. They moved further south along the eastern slopes of the Sulaiman range stealing cattle as they went, and eventually turned back to the west at the Sakhi Sarwar pass. There at the eastern mouth of the pass in an ironic finale to this campaign Bābur had one of his soldiers cut to pieces for troubling the residents of a sufi shrine.[32] The unnamed soldier might understandably have failed to distinguish between ordinary Afghāns, presumably Muslims, whom a presumptive Tīmūrid emperor might slaughter with impunity, from Muslim residents of a prestigious shrine, most probably Afghāns, whom an aspiring ruler would ostentatiously protect in order to further his reputation as a pious ruler. But not just that. Born into a discipleship of Khwājah Ahrār, Bābur genuinely revered sufi *shaykh*s or *pīr*s. One of his first acts after entering Delhi in 1526 was to circumambulate the tombs of Nizām al-Dīn Auliyā', the Chishtī *pīr* and Khwājah Qutb al-Dīn Ushī, a native of Ush in Ferghanah.[33]

After Bābur's force turned inland along the Sakhi Sarwar pass they entered the dry, rocky landscape of the Sulaiman range. No fodder was available and spring rains added to the already cresting rivers. It is impossible to tell from Bābur's description of the difficult return march if he and his men were able to keep any of their plundered sheep and cattle. Based on the evidence of his narrative it seems extremely doubtful. They continued to raid Afghān villages as they wound their way through the long pass. He mentions they began abandoning horses after several marches. Lacking pack animals Bābur himself had to leave his own large felt tent behind, and one night after torrential rains filled his remaining tent with water up to his shins, he had to spend the entire night sitting uncomfortably, *'usrat*, literally in distress, surrounded by water on an artificial island of *kilīms* he piled in the middle of the tent.[34] As the march progressed towards Ghazni members of the army began leaving horses behind at each camp so that two or three hundred horses were abandoned and even important men such as "Mahmūd Oqhlaqchï, who was one of my prominent *ichki*s,

[32] BN-M, f. 151b.
[33] BN-M, f. 267b.
[34] BN-M, f. 152a.

leaving all his horses behind, went on foot."[35] Finally, after swimming the horses and camels across another rain-swollen river the army or, more accurately, the raiding party, reached Ghazni. There Jahāngīr Mīrzā, who had been assigned the town and its surrounding districts, acted as host, fed the men and offered what Bābur describes as *pīshkashlar* or tributary presents, obviously in his mind an appropriate gesture to an older brother and sovereign. When they returned to Kabul, writes Haydar Mīrzā, many of Khusrau Shāh's men "dispersed," although he doesn't say either where they went or whether they left as cohesive military or social groups.[36]

Brothers in Empire

Bābur makes only passing references to his brothers Jahāngīr and Nāsir Mīrzā in his Ferghanah narrative. He mentions that in 1494 seven year-old Nāsir Mīrzā was in Kasan with his *beg atekeh*, Ways Lāgharī, when Mahmūd Khan marched on Akhsi. After describing how Ways Lāgharī and his friend Mīr Ghiyās Tagha'ï gave up Kasan to Mahmūd Khan, after which Ways Lāgharī handed over Nāsir Mīrzā to Sultān Ahmad Mirzā, Bābur doesn't mention his youngest half-brother again until he relates the events leading up to his final disastrous battle with Sultān Ahmad Tambal within Akhsi in 1503. When Bābur arrived at Akhsi just after forming an alliance with his Mongol relatives to retake Ferghanah, he describes meeting Nāsir Mīrzā in the company of Shaykh Bāyizīd, one of Ahmad Tambal's younger brothers, who then held the fort for Tambal. He does not explain where Nāsir Mīrzā had been during the intervening years, but the reader infers that he, like Bābur's other brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā, had been passed around as a human bargaining chip, and had been acquired by Tambal as part of his apparent effort to capture all three of 'Umar Shaykh Mīrzā's sons. The next time Bābur mentions him, Nāsir Mīrzā is commanding the right flank of Bābur's army before Kabul in 1504.

If Nāsir Mīrzā had been anything more than a captive pawn during the Ferghanah period Bābur almost certainly would have

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[35] BN-M, f. 152b.
[36] TR-T, f. 97b.

commented on his brother's role. However, after Bābur occupied Kabul and assigned him districts east of Kabul city in Lamghanat province, Nāsir Mīrzā began to act like a typical younger half-brother in a decentralized Turco-Mongol state. Quite apart from their status as half-brothers Bābur and Nāsir Mīrzā scarcely knew each other, and as Bābur tells it Nāsir Mīrzā began acting independently virtually as soon as moved to his assigned district. When Bābur marched east along the Kabul-Ningnahar road in January 1505 to raid India he met Nāsir Mīrzā, who was supposed to follow him in a few days. Instead his brother and men launched an ill-planned attack on the nearby mountain fortress of Darah-i nur. After being repulsed Nāsir Mīrzā retreated back to his district but whether because of a "perverse heart" or for other reasons, never followed Bābur.[37] Instead he spent the winter drinking and carousing with his companions.

In the spring Nāsir Mīrzā and his men forced Mongol clans or tribes, their families and herds who had come to Ningnahar and Lamghanat, to move northwest to the banks of the Baran river. These Mongols were probably some of those who had fled south from Badakhshan and Qunduz with Bābur, who by tone of his narrative implicitly criticizes their forced relocation by Nāsir Mīrzā. Control over tribal families gave Nāsir Mīrzā access to their flocks and some influence over their fighting men, two critical resources in the Kabul region in 1505. When Nāsir Mīrzā began moving these particular families to the northwest he may have already decided to march on Badakhshan, which the Uzbeks had not successfully pacified. Bābur believed that Nāsir Mīrzā only heard about the Uzbeks' troubles after arriving on the banks of the Baran river, but whatever the exact sequence of events Nāsir Mīrzā drove these tribal families further north towards Badakhshan in May or June of 1505. Indigenous Badakhshānī chiefs had evidently invited him to come.[38]

Many if not all of these tribal families transferred their loyalty to the Uzbeks shortly after they arrived in Badakhshan, the region and province of northeastern Afghanistan. Yet the following spring Nāsir Mīrzā and his local allies actually defeated an Uzbek army of several thousand men. He promptly sent news of his victory to

[37] BN-M, f. 154a.
[38] BN-M, f. 155b.

Bābur, who acknowledges he received the news in the Kahmard region north of Bamian as he was riding to Harat to form an anti-Uzbek alliance with the Harat Tīmūrids, Sultān Husayn Bayqara and his sons.[39] If Nāsir Mīrzā expected that he would reconcile his elder brother to his activities by swiftly informing Bābur of his victory he was mistaken. Bābur regarded his brother's Badakhshan campaign as a rebellion against his own authority. He makes this clear when he describes, with considerable relish, how Nāsir Mīrzā fell out with his Badakhshānī allies and was defeated by them in the spring of 1507. "'*Ajab qaderidur*," he exclaims in with exactly the same words he used to describe Khusrau Shāh's humiliation on the banks of the Andarab, "How wonderful is his power. Two to three years earlier Nāsir Mīrzā in rebellion forcibly moved *il ve ulus*, tribe and nation, from Kabul to Badakhshan, fortifying valleys and fortresses. With what ideas did he march?"[40] Nāsir Mīrzā had retreated back to Kabul with "seventy or eighty naked and hungry men." Bābur then concludes his narrative of the year 912 a. h. with a stylized depiction of his brotherly forgiveness and royal compassion when Nāsir Mīrzā appeared before him. "Abashed and embarrassed for his past deeds and his manner of departing," he writes of Nāsir Mīrzā's Badakhshan adventure, "He was covered with shame. Yet I showed no sort of harshness and kindly enquired and calmed his distress."[41]

Nāsir Mīrzā is scarcely mentioned in the remainder of Bābur's surviving narrative, which breaks off in the spring of 1508 and is not resumed until 1519. He takes part in the conquest of Qandahar in the summer of 1507 and is later assigned the city, but afterwards retreated back to Ghazni in the face of Uzbek attacks and died in 1515 in unexplained circumstances. His career, all told of course from Bābur's perspective, illustrates the common ambition of all Tīmūrid *mīrzā*s to secure their own independent appanages. Badakhshan represented Nāsir Mīrzā's one attempt to secure a territory far enough away from Kabul to offer the chance at establishing autonomous or independent rule. Bābur asked a rhetorical

[39] BN-M, f. 184a. Bābur probably took this mountainous route because Muqīm Arghun, his father and brother still ruled in Qandahar on the far easier southern road.
[40] BN-M, f. 202b.
[41] BN-M, f. 203a.

question when he wrote about his brother's adventure, "With what ideas did he march?" He must have understood Nāsir Mīrzā's intentions well enough. By sending Bābur news of his initial success Nāsir Mīrzā probably intended this gesture to represent an offer to become Bābur's nominal feudatory, expecting to remain an autonomous Tīmūrid ruler in the north. Despite Bābur's irritation with his younger half-brother it may have occurred to him that Nāsir Mīrzā sought to realize in Badakhshan what their father ʿUmar Shaykh had successfully achieved years earlier in Ferghanah, de facto independence from **his** elder brother, the nominal ruler of all Mawarannahr, Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā of Samarqand.

Jahāngīr Mīrzā's relations with Bābur seem to have been shaped by a similar ambition to secure an autonomous or independent appanage, but as is true of Nāsir Mīrzā's ambitions, Jahāngīr Mīrzā's intentions have to be inferred from Bābur's self-interested commentary. While narrating events in 1504 Bābur alludes to his past irritation with Jahāngīr, saying there had been many "resentments and sharp words between himself and Jahāngīr over kingdom and retainers."[42] Yet it is impossible to be certain what Bābur is referring to in this passage, for Jahāngīr never acted independently in Ferghanah between 1494 and 1504. After ʿUmar Shaykh died Jahāngīr joined Bābur in Andijan, and seems to have remained with him until May or June 1497, when he was captured by Bābur's arch-rival, Sultān Ahmad Tambal. Perhaps Jahāngīr and Tambal had spoken or even conspired together before Tambal deserted from Bābur's forces in Samarqand. That would explain Tambal's demand that Ferghanah should be given to Jahāngīr Mīrzā, a demand made after Tambal had left Samarqand but apparently before he captured Bābur's brother. However, it isn't consistent with Bābur's subsequent portrayal of Jahāngīr as a captive, whose escort, one of Bābur's trusted Mughul aides, was killed by Tambal. Several times Bābur refers to occasions in which *Tambal Jahāngīr ni alib kilib*,[43] Tambal "took" or "brought" Jahāngīr from once place to another in the confusing skirmishing that occurred between himself and his Mongol enemy. Yet in February 1500 Jahāngīr was present at a meeting at which he and Tambal

[42] BN-M, f. 121b.
[43] See for example BN-M, fs.. 66a and 69b.

met Bābur to ratify an agreement giving Jahāngīr the Akhsi region. Jahāngīr could presumably have rejoined Bābur at this point if he had chosen to do so. Bābur doesn't raise this possibility, but merely remarks that at the conclusion of this meeting both men "paid their respects," *malāzamat qildilar*, and then left for Akhsi.[44] Perhaps Jahāngīr had become Tambal's willing captive, lured by prospect of ruling from Akhsi. It would have been natural for Jahāngīr to covet Akhsi as his legitimate appanage, as he had lived there with his father before ʿUmar Shaykh's death.

Jahāngīr Mīrzā remained with Tambal through 1503 and then escaped from him at Marginan to join his older brother just before Tambal and his men defeated Bābur within Akhsi. In the interval Jahāngīr seems to have spent most of the time at Akhsi—Bābur sent a messenger to him there just before he left for his second attempt on Samarqand in 1500. After occupying the city a second time he reports that "from Jahāngīr 100-200 men commanded by Khalil Sultān, Tambal's brother came to help,"[45] but when he writes this does Bābur really mean to imply that his brother acted on his own initiative? It is extremely unlikely that Jahāngīr could have commanded Tambal's brother's loyalty or obedience. Jahāngīr continued in Akhsi with Tambal during Bābur's *qazaqlïq* days after he fled Samarqand and the Uzbeks. His subsequent flight from Tambal in 1503 to join Bābur in Akhsi might have been motivated by a realization he would never rule independently allied with Tambal and possibly because of resentment of Tambal's brutal manner—if Bābur's characterization of his enemy can be believed. Finally, only two things can be said with certainty about the brothers' relations in Ferghanah: it would have been entirely natural for Jahāngīr to regard Akhsi as his legitimate appanage and Bābur writing years afterward resented his brother's independent ambition. Bābur concludes the passage in which he alludes to the "resentments and sharp words" between him and his brother by observing that in 1504 as they paused at the Ajar fortress to celebrate Jahāngīr's marriage, Jahāngīr had become a "companion" who acted, *tuqqanlïq ve khidmatgārlïq*, in a "familial and deferential manner."[46]

44 BN-M, f. 74b.
45 BN-M, f. 88a.
46 BN-M, f. 121b.

Bābur's discussion of Jahāngīr's past and present behavior concludes a longer passage in which he implicitly raises the issue of the inherent tensions between Tīmūrid brethern. Just after mentioning Jahāngīr's marriage he says that Bāqī Chaghāniānī, his newfound ally, advised him repeatedly to get rid of Jahāngīr and the potential political problems he represented by sending him off towards Khurasan, "with graciousness and liberality." After all, Baqī Chaghāniānī argued in a irrefutable if hoary aphorism, "Two pādshāhs in one province and two commanders in one army are the cause of dissension and desolation, the occasion of rebellion and ruin."[47] The text then follows with another aphorism, a rhyming couplet: "Ten dervishes can snore under a single *kilīm* [a flatweave], but two *pādshāh*s cannot coexist in a single *iqlīm* [a clime]," and these lines from Saʿdī's *Gulistān*.

If a religious man eats half a loaf,
He liberally offers the other half to dervishes.
But if a king should seize a clime.
Exactly thus he will desire another.[48]

In this instance Bābur apparently supplies the couplet and Saʿdī's verse to signal his agreement with Bāqī's advice and typically legitimize his argument by citing the wisdom of one of Iran's classical poets.

Yet Bābur then writes that he couldn't treat Jahāngīr Mīrzā this way "since it was not in my nature to injure kinsmen or clients who had somehow failed in their duty to me."[49] Here as in several other points of the narrative he emphasizes his concern for family and retainers, an ideal associated in his eyes with deference due to his status. Based on the accumulated evidence of the text and the comments of Haydar Mīrzā, Bābur seems to have genuinely felt this concern and to have acted on his family feelings on many occasions. However, in what may be intended as another lesson for Humāyūn, Bābur shows his brotherly compassion to have been

[47] BN-M, f. 121a.
[48] Ibid., f. 121a.
[49] BN-M, f. 121b. The phrase translated here as "somehow failed in their duty to me" is an elaboration of Bābur's typically terse prose, *bir necha bī adalïq vagheʿ bolse*. The key word is *bī adalïq*, by which Bābur appears to mean failing to do him the service his rank or position demanded.

misplaced, for he concludes this section by demonstrating that Bāqī Chaghāniānī's advice had been correct, as eventually Jahāngīr was influenced to assert his independence. Yet, for the next year and a half he served with Bābur, and his fling at establishing an appanage larger or richer than Ghazni was a quixotic affair, lasting only a few months. Nonetheless, the affair is interesting because Bābur's elliptical references to his brother's conduct are amplified by his cousin, Haydar Mīrzā, in his chapters on this period.

According to Bābur, Jahāngīr took offence at some imagined slight and left Ghazni for Bamian just at the time Nāsir Mīrzā was driving nomadic families before him into Badakhshan.[50] In fact the coincidence of these events raises the possibility that Jahāngīr might have taken a cue from his younger brother or had been cooperating with him. Bābur expresses concern that Jahāngīr might gain control over some of the nomadic households his younger brother had forced north, but he doesn't explain where Jahāngīr might have been headed. Haydar Mīrzā on the other hand says that Jahāngīr Mīrzā acted at that precise moment for one specific reason. He learned that Sultān Husayn Bayqara had died in Harat and because he was "discontented with the narrow limits of his territories," he wrote to Bābur telling him he was going to Khurasan and form an alliance with Husayn Bayqara's sons.[51] Bābur, already marching toward Harat himself, now in May or June 1506 made a forced march to Bamian, arriving there before his brother, who then moved off to the northwest. In Bābur's version of events Jahāngīr then attempted to win over some of the nomad clans who had left his brother Nāsir Mīrzā, but after failing in that he had to return to his brother, just as Nāsir Mīrzā was forced to do a short time later after his loss in Badakhshan. Eventually Bābur and Jahāngīr marched off together to Harat, and on the return journey Jahāngīr fell ill, collapsed and, for Bābur's future interest, conveniently died.[52]

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[50] Ibid., f. 183b.
[51] TR-T, f. 94.
[52] TR-T, f. 96b.

Fin de siècle Harat

In the late winter or early spring 1506 Sultān Husayn Bayqara appealed to his sons, *beg*s and, through a special envoy, to Bābur to join an anti-Uzbek alliance. This was the second time Husayn Bayqara had called on Bābur since he arrived in Afghanistan. About the time Bābur had camped at Ajar in 1504 to celebrate Jahāngīr Mīrzā's wedding, a letter had arrived from Husayn Bayqara asking him to join with his sons in fortifying northern and central Afghanistan against the Uzbeks. He asked Bābur to fortify mountain slopes around Kahmard and Ajar, evidently not realizing his nephew's desperately poor condition at that moment. Bābur writes that these letters, some of which he still possessed in 1527-28, had left him *nā-ūmīdlik*, with a sense of hopelessness, as his uncle was not planning to attack the Uzbeks but merely establish a static defense line. Here was the greatest Tīmūrid—"in age, territory and army" planning passively to receive the Uzbek enemy. "How could, *il ve ulus*, tribe and people, have hope?"[53]

Now finally in 1506 Husayn Bayqara announced he was going to attack the Uzbeks and Bābur remembers that he could not refuse a summons from a ruler "such a sultān as Husayn Mīrzā who sat in Tīmūr Beg's place." In fact, he writes, "If others marched on foot, we would march on our heads, if others marched with clubs, we would march with stones."[54] Bābur also candidly notes in this same passage that he had to get his troops moving west towards Khurasan anyway to prevent Jahāngīr Mīrzā from gaining control over any of the Mongol households who had left Nāsir Mīrzā. As Bābur passed Bamian moving north-northwest towards Balkh close behind Jahāngīr, he received word that Husayn Bayqara died as he marched north to challenge Uzbek forces. "In spite of this news," Bābur writes "we continued on towards Khurasan to protect the good name of the dynasty—although there were also other considerations"[55] This candid admission was evidently another allusion to his desire to bring Jahāngīr to heel, which he was able to accomplish shortly afterwards, when Mongol households in the region south of Balkh pledged their allegiance to Bābur, leaving his

[53] BN-M, f. 122a.
[54] BN-M, f. 163a
[55] BN-M, f. 184b.

brother no choice but to return to him. Then as Uzbeks besieged Balkh and sent raiders south, Bābur received more letters urging him to join the anti-Uzbek coalition of Husayn Bayqara's sons and begs in Harat. "Having already come one to two hundred stages," Bābur pointedly observes, why should I myself not go?[56] He turned west-southwest through the mountainous terrain of Gurziwan in the direction of Harat.

On the 26th of October 1506 Bābur arrived near the banks of the Murghab River, about 110 miles northeast of Harat where some of his Tīmūrid cousins had arrived from Harat to greet him. The cousins' early encounters constituted a series of polite but deadly serious social maneuvers in which the cousins warily greeted one another while carefully asserting their Tīmūrid status. At first Bābur met with Abū'l Muhsin Mīrzā on open ground, both dismounting, walking forward to meet and then remounting. Then as they rode together to the Harat camp Bābur saw two more of Husayn Bayqara's sons, younger brothers to Abū'l Muhsin, who being younger brothers, Bābur tartly remarks, should have come further out to greet him. However, he graciously excuses their faux pas, observing that "their delay was probably due to drowsiness caused by *ʿaish u ʿishrat*, debauchery and revelry, and not to either arrogance or sullenness." This was an excuse any Turco-Mongol warrior could understand. With another older brother, Muzaffar Mīrzā, offering apologies they rode off to the tent of Husayn Bayqara's eldest son, and principal heir, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā.[57]

Bābur then describes the ritualized Tīmūrid pas de deux which he and his cousin performed as they strained to be polite while preserving their honor. "We reached Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā's reception tent," recalls Bābur.

> It had been arranged exactly like this, that upon entering I would bend the knee; Badīʿ al-Zamān rising, would come to the edge of the carpet, and we would see one another. Entering the tent I bent the knee and briskly advanced. Badīʿ al-Zamān rising more slowly, came forward more languidly. Qāsim Beg [Qauchin] as he was a supporter whose good name was inseparable from my good name, tugged at my sash. I understood [and] moved more slowly. The meeting then took place at the prearranged place.[58]

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[56] BN-M, f. 185b.
[57] BN-M, fs. 185b-186a.
[58] BN-M, f. 186a.

With cushions placed around the circumference of the large tent Bābur, Jahāngīr Mīrzā and other guests were carefully seated according to precedence. Now the joint rulers of Harat, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muzaffar Mīrzā sat together with Bābur and Abūʾl Muhsin in a place of honor to their immediate right. Immediately to Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā's left sat his son-in law, an Uzbek named Qāsim Sultān. Jahāngīr Mīrzā was seated to Bābur's right and below him. Seated alongside Jahāngīr was Abd al-Razzaq Mīrzā, Ulugh Beg Kābulī's son, who had joined Bābur in Kabul shortly after his arrival there and accompanied him to Harat.[59] Left of the Uzbek but below him sat Zūʿn Nūn Arghun, the father of Muqīm, whom Bābur had chased from Kabul, and finally along side him sat Bābur's man, Qāsim Beg.[60]

Evidently alluding to the underlying tension of this meeting, Bābur writes that even though food was then served, *suhbat yoq*, "this was not a companionable gathering."[61] However, it apparently was an elegant affair in which the meal was conducted according to Mongol custom. Although Bābur does not, uncharacteristically, describe the details of Mongol social etiquette he remarks in passing that his ancestors had previously adhered scrupulously to the *törah*, the Chingīzid code, in all things including "feasts and dinners." Bābur implies that his cousins were at fault for rigidly adhering to these customs, however hallowed by tradition, remarking that 'If ancestors leave a bad custom...it is necessary to substitute a good one."[62] His comments appear to reflect his long-held resentment that Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā particularly had been discourteous, a complaint he makes explicit as he describes his next visit to his elder cousin's camp, when, he reports without elaboration, Badīʿ al-Zamān did not act respectfully.

Here again in the text Bābur leaves an autobiographical sign post about his status in the Tīmūrid world, similar to the passage where he compares his second capture of Samarqand to Husayn Bayqara's seizure of Harat. Alluding to Badī al-Zamān Mīrzā's behavior he writes:

[59] BN-M, fs. 149a and 186b.

[60] See BN-M, fs. 172a-b for Bābur's description of the Arghuns and their relationship with the Harat Tīmūrids.

[61] BN-M, f. 186b.

[62] BN-M, f. 186b.

> It is true that I was young but my place of honor [in the Tīmūrid house] was great. Twice I had taken the ancestral capital, Samarqand, in battle. No one had fought with this foreign enemy for the *khānivādih* [the family or dynasty] as I had done. It was unconscionable to delay in showing me respect.[63]

In this passage Bābur argues his case for his Turco-Mongol audience. Perhaps he did not expect them to recall the desperate circumstances of his two occupations of Samarqand. Perhaps he did not expect his readers to reflect that his seizure of the provincial outpost of Kabul with a rag-tag force probably did not strike the sons of the "twice-noble" Husayn Bayqara as particularly significant. Perhaps he did not expect them to consider that in occupying Kabul Bābur had displaced his cousins' Arghun feudatory, thereby weakening their own power. Perhaps Bābur did not expect his readers to consider any other Tīmūrid's point of view. Perhaps he was right.

After resolving these serious issues of precedence and status Bābur camped for more than a month on the banks of the Murghab River, wiling away his time at elegant feasts, with partridge and goose kebabs at Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā's, who "was famous for his social gatherings." Nearly forgotten, apparently, was the Harat *mīrzās*' original purpose in marching to the Murghab, Shībānī Khan's siege of Balkh. Bābur remarks it had taken them "three to four months to move out of Harat, reach an agreement and assemble." Meanwhile Shībānī Khan captured Balkh and then retired back to Samarqand with his main force when he heard the Tīmūrids were on the march. He need not have worried; the Harat *mīrzās* excelled at carving roast partridge, but seemed incapable of mounting a serious military campaign. Then when Bābur wanted to set off to attack a force of an estimated four or five hundred Uzbek raiders operating only about sixty or seventy kilometers to the northeast, the *mīrzās* did not march, but would not let Bābur go either because, he writes, it impugned their honor. By that time it was November, so they decided to postpone the Uzbek campaign until next spring and retire back to Harat, insisting that Bābur come along for what in Bābur's description sounds like the Tīmūrid

[63] BN-M, f. 187a.

winter social season of 1506, a continuous round of feasts, drinking parties and visits to relatives.[64]

Bābur says he did not want to remain in Khurasan, knowing it would take at least a month to return to Kabul at that time of year. His writing was probably informed by the hindsight of a coup that occurred in the city during his absence, so it is not surprising when he says that in November 1506 he wanted to return because Kabul was not completely pacified. In fact with this knowledge it is understandable why he writes that Kabul and Ghazni were *pur sharr u shūr*, full of wickedness and depravity.[65] Yet Bābur must have realized even in November 1506 that Kabul, which he had seized only two years earlier, was hardly secure. Still, he decided to join his cousins in Harat. It was impossible, he writes, to turn down the repeated entreaties of such *pādshāh*s, such kings, suggesting how grand these Harat cousins seemed to him, however much he insisted on receiving their formal acknowledgment of high Tīmūrid status. Harat under Husayn Bayqara was the great Tīmūrid city of its day, in fact the cultural center of the Perso-Islamic world, so it is understandable that a young aspiring Tīmūrid like Bābur says he also agreed to stay because he had a powerful desire just to see the city.[66]

Bābur arrived in Harat on the 2nd or 3rd of December and stayed there for twenty days. He portrays his stay as a continuous round of sight-seeing and parties, prefaced by a visit to several of his paternal aunts who lived in the city. While in Harat he resided, in fact, in Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's house, which must have been an extraordinary moment for the young aspiring poet who had written to Navāʾī six years earlier, just a year before the great man's death. Bābur doesn't mention what feelings Navāʾī's house may have evoked. Most of his narrative energy in this Harat section is given over to a discussion of how he felt attending drinking parties when he himself did not drink, having abstained since childhood, even when his father had offered him wine!

After his father's death and under the religious tutelage of Khwājah Maulānā Qāzī he continued to abstain. In later times,

[64] BN-M, f. 187b.
[65] BN-M, f. 187b.
[66] BN-M, f. 188a.

presumably after Ahmad Tambal killed his tutor and mentor, Bābur says he began to crave wine—"out of youthful spirit and carnal longing." Yet by then he couldn't find anyone to offer him any, demonstrating that he regarded drinking as a social ritual not a private act. Now in 1506 here he was "in a splendid city like Harat where the means of luxurious pleasure were at hand and the resources for abundant enjoyment were available," so he decided to indulge. He was stymied, though, by questions of etiquette; he could not first take wine from Muzaffar Mīrzā without offending his older brother, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā, and so the moment was postponed until the two Harat Tīmūrids jointly entertained. Unfortunately they never seem to have done so during Bābur's visit, so it was five or six years later that he finally took wine, after which he quickly warmed to the Turco-Mongol drinking culture.[67]

Perhaps it was predictable, given Tīmūrid sibling rivalry, that Muzaffar Mīrzā and his elder brother would compete with each other as they did in staging lavish parties for their country cousin rather than hosting a joint gathering. This was the social consequence of appanage politics. When Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā learned his younger brother had entertained Bābur he countered with a spectacular affair set at a kiosk in one of the city's large gardens. Amidst willow trees brought in decorated with strips of gilded leather Bābur enjoyed another feast, but one which again served to contrast his provincial background with the high sophistication of his hosts.[68] When a roast goose was placed before him he did not touch it because he had never carved a bird before. After enquiring why he hesitated Badīʿ al-Zamān carved it himself. His cousin was, Bābur remarks, "unrivalled in such matters."[69] It was such skills Bābur alluded to when he observed his cousins excelled in social gatherings and polite conversation but complained of their lack of aggressiveness and military preparedness.[70] Carving was only a small sign of the Harat Tīmūrids' *pur zarāfat*, their refined manners or urbane sophistication, which included "quiet, delicate and melodious" poetry recitals conducted to the accompaniment of the *nāʿī*

[67] BN-M, fs. 189a-b.

[68] Eiji Mano discusses this passage with his usual erudition in his article, "The Weeping-willows Passage in the *Bābur-nāma*," *Proceedings of the 27th Meeting of Haneda Memorial Hall* (Kyoto: Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 1993), 28-35.

[69] BN-M, f. 191a.

[70] BN-M, f. 187b.

or flute and the *chānk* (*chenk*), a hammer dulcimer, harp or jews harp, and elegant dancing.[71]

Bracketed as they are by Bābur's earlier complaints about his cousins' military incompetence and his subsequent description of the Uzbek capture of Harat in June or July 1507, his descriptions of Harat social life convey a fin de siècle atmosphere. A century earlier Tīmūr had died, and less than seven months after Bābur left Harat the city fell, virtually without a fight. Writing with the first-hand information gathered from refugees who fled the Uzbeks to Kabul, Bābur reports that when Shībānī Khan crossed the Murghab in May or June 1507 Badīʿ al-Zamān and Muzaffar Mīrzā were *sarāsīmah*, "stupefied," and unable to act. By the evidence of Bābur's narrative, the brothers and Zū'n Nūn Arghun moved out just east of the city to confront the Uzbeks but once in the field were paralyzed with indecision. "They neither gathered additional troops nor organized a line of defense." Rather each marched off on his own. After Zū'n Nūn Arghun charged thousands of Uzbek troops with fewer than two hundred men, and was captured and beheaded, the two *mīrzās* retreated back to Harat, stayed overnight and then fled, leaving their wives and families behind.[72] They and a few defenders held out within the inner fortress for two weeks before surrendering.

This inglorious denouement of Tīmūrid power in Khurasan was immediately followed by its pitiful climax as Shībānī Khan engaged in what Bābur terms all manner of "crude and vile" acts and also eradicated Tīmūrids in the region. Bābur could hardly be expected to speak in measured tones about a man who had single-handedly

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71 BN-M, f. 190a. Annette Beveridge translates *chānk* as Jews harp. BN-B, f. 190a. Arat translates the word in the same way. BN-A, f. 190a. Bābur uses the word *chank* for literary effect in his thirty-ninth ghazal. See I. V. Stebleva, *Semantika Gazeli Bābura* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 94-94 and 247. The metaphorical use of musical instruments in Persian poetry is discussed by A. L. F. A. Beelaert, "The Complaint of Musical Instruments: The Evolution of an Image in Classical Persian Poetry," in Bert Fragner et al ed., *Proceedings of the Second European Conference of Iranian Studies* (Rome: Instituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1995), 81-96 and Plate XIII. In Iran the *chang* usually refers to the harp. See Jean During et al, *The Art of Persian Music* (Washington D.C.: Mage, 1991), 101-04. For information on instruments in late-twentieth century Central Asia see the delightful book by Theodore Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God*, Musical Travels in Central Asia (And Queens, New York) (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996), glossary, 290.

72 BN-M, f. 205b.

destroyed the late-Timurid world. Yet, his description of Shībānī's first days in Harat makes the Uzbek chieftan seem like quite a restrained if rustic conqueror when measured against the violent standards of the day, especially when compared to the actions of the Safavids when they later took the city and indulged in the violent religious persecution that characterized their militantly Shiʿī regime. In fact, Bābur's litany of Shībānī's offenses seems almost comically inconsequential and, if accurate, indicates little more than that Shībānī was an arriviste, clumsily trying to gain instant social status and cultural recognition in cosmopolitan Harat. According to Bābur, Shībānī almost immediately married Muzaffar Mīrzā's wife, before the proscribed interval had passed, instructed elite Quranic scholars, despite his vulgarity, criticized the painting of Bihzād, the outstanding miniaturist of the day, and not the least of his offenses against civilized behavior in Bābur's eyes, wrote an "insipid and tasteless couplet" which he had posted in the city square for popular admiration.[73] As for the literati of Harat, they were given over to the charge of Mulla Bannāʾī, the poet who had sought Bābur's patronage in Samarqand, but left him for Shībānī Khan a short time later. Before this Bannāʾī had been Mir ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's rival in Harat, so now he returned home in a kind of triumph. In Bābur's mind the fact that Shībānī ably recited the Quran and prayed five times a day hardly compensated for other "irreligious, uncivil and bizarre words and deeds." It is not surprising that he fails to mention that one of Shībānī's first acts after entering Harat was to institute a very intelligent reform of the coinage![74] This occurred, of course, after he had extracted substantial indemnities and tribute from the Harat population.[75]

As Shībānī was having his rustic way with Harat, Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā fled to Iranian Azerbaijan, where he was eventually captured by Ottoman troops and taken to Istanbul. Muzaffar Mīrzā fled toward his previous appanage at Astarābād, near the Caspian, and disappears from Bābur's narrative. Two of Husayn Bayqara's

[73] "*Bir bimazah bay*t." BN-M, f. 206b.
[74] Elena A. Davidovich, "The Monetary Reform of Shībānī Khan in 913-914/1507-08," in Devin DeWeese ed., *Studies in Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel*, 129-85.
[75] Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar,* III, 377-78.

other sons, the younger *mīrzā*s who in their hangovers had been dilatory about greeting Bābur on the Murghab, fled to nearby Mashad where Uzbeks captured them and, after they embraced, writes Bābur, beheaded them seated together on the ground.[76]

Before Bābur had left Harat and inadvertently saved himself from his cousins' fate, he found time in the midst of sight-seeing and parties to become engaged once more, to another of Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā's daughters, Maʿsūmah Sultān Begim. She had been brought to the city by her mother sometime well before the *fatratlar*, says Bābur, the disturbed times, an evident allusion to his life before 1496. Her mother was related to the Arghuns, the Mongol clan whose members exercised so much influence at Husayn Bayqara's court, and that connection probably explains her presence in the city. Bābur gives two versions of this engagement, one of many examples of the complexity of his text. In the first, which he includes in the Ferghanah gazetteer as he is enumerating Ahmad Mīrzā's family, he writes succinctly, "Upon coming to Khurasan I saw her, liked her, asked for her and had her brought to Kabul."[77] In this version, a kind of precis for genealogical purposes, Bābur's abbreviated style apparently conceals as much as it explains, for when he describes meeting this girl in Harat at the house of Pāyindah Sultān Begim, his paternal aunt and a wife of Husayn Bayqara, it is Maʿsūmah Sultān Begim who is drawn to Bābur. "She saw me, he writes, "and immediately on seeing me, felt deeply taken with me."[78] After negotiations between the girl's mother and Pāyandah Sultān Begim, a marriage was arranged, and the girl joined Bābur in Kabul the following year. However, she died tragically giving birth to a daughter who took her mother's name, Maʿsūmah Sultān Begim.

It is sometimes difficult even to imagine the existence of a domestic social life beneath the ever-shifting surface of Tīmūrid politics.[79] Bābur's descriptions of his visits to relatives, and of his

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[76] BN-M, fs. 206b-207a. Khwāndamīr describes their deaths with considerable rhetorical relish. *Habīb al-siyar*, III, 384-86.

[77] BN-M, f. 20a.

[78] BN-M, fs. 191b-192a.

[79] One person who does is Ruby Lal in her article, "The 'Domestic' World of Peripatetic Kings: Babur Humayun, c. 1494-1556," in *The Medieval History Journal* 4, 1 (2001), 43-82.

betrothals, marriages and children at least reveal a human constant in an otherwise chaotic world. Yet having mentioned these events he quickly returns the narrative to his preoccupation with political survival. In political and military terms Bābur had accomplished nothing by marching to Harat, and by mid-December as snow began to fall in the mountains of central Afghanistan, "extremely anxious about Kabul,"[80] he decided to return to his recently-won kingdom.

Kabul and Qandahar

There is nothing in Bābur's description of the initial phase of the return journey to Kabul to indicate that at the time he knew anything was wrong there. He reports that the march went very slowly, halting in camp for a day or two at a time so that unnamed *yigitler* could visit their *vilāyatlar*, their home territories, to collect taxes and for other business. As Bābur was then moving almost due east along the Hari Rud river these men must have been Khusrau Shāh's former retainers who had long lived in central Afghanistan; his own Ferghanah Turks and Mongols would not have held estates in these regions. Bābur says that some of these men rejoined his column, but that others did not reach Kabul until two or three weeks after he did. Some never returned because they decided for unspecified reasons to leave Bābur and take service with the Harat *mīrzā*s. He names only one, Sayyidim ʿAlī, whom he obviously regretted loosing. Bābur describes him at length—brave, witty, generous—one of Khusrau Shāh's best *naukar*s, but he does not condemn the man for changing Tīmūrid patrons. Life in Ferghanah had taught him this was commonly accepted behavior. If Sayyidim ʿAlī had left him for Shībānī Khan Uzbek he might have reacted very differently.[81]

By now it was late December or early January and snow fell continuously as Bābur continued to march away from Harat along the river. At the village of Chacharan, which Zūʾn Nūn Arghun "held," [*taʿalluqah idi*], "We purchased all Zūʾn Nūn's grain."[82]

[80] BN-M, f. 192a.
[81] BN-M, fs. 192a-b.
[82] BN-M, f. 192b.

Debating whether to take the southern but longer Qandahar road or retrace the shorter route in an arc through the mountains they decided on the latter. Bābur in recognizable, self-serving, autobiographical style blames Qāsim Beg Qauchin for persuading him to ride into the mountains in the winter, which was a predictably disastrous decision. After first loosing the road in heavy drifts they forged on in snow so deep that his men took turns trampling down the snow on foot so the horses could be led through.

> In nearly a week of trampling the snow we were unable to progress more than a mile or two a day. I was one of the snow-trampling people with ten or fifteen *ichki*s, Qāsim Beg and his two sons, Tengri Birdi and Qambar ʿAlī and also two or three *naukar*. Those mentioned going on foot we trampled the snow. Each person would trample the snow moving seven, eight or ten yards forward. At each step they would sink to their waist or chest while trampling the snow. After a few steps the lead man would halt, exhausted and another man would take his place.[83]

Speaking of the this trip through the mountains Bābur says he experienced more peril and misery in these few days than at any other time of his life,[84] a memory seemingly ratified by the evocative power of his narration. As they battled through drifts uphill toward the Zirrin Pass in the general direction of Bamian the weather closed in. He and his men were trapped in a blinding snowstorm,[85] forcing them to halt by a small cave. Bābur says that at first he refused his men's entreaties to take shelter inside the cave, as there didn't seem to be enough room for everyone. Evoking a warrior ethos that he must have felt would strongly appeal to his Turki-speaking audience Bābur notes that he could hardly go inside to warmth and leave his men outside in cold. "That would be far from manly, quite contrary to comradeship."[86] The next day they pressed on, spent another miserable night outside on the mountain ridge exposed to the bitter cold, many suffering from frostbite. Finally, though, they traversed the pass, fought their way through deep snow to the valley below and found

[83] BN-M, f. 193b.
[84] BN-M, f. 193b.
[85] Beveridge with her usual care discusses the exact route. BN-B, p. 310, n. 2. It can also be traced in Irfan Habib's *Atlas of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, repr. 1986), 1a-b "Northern Afghanistan."
[86] BN-M, f. 194b.

refuge, food and warmth with the people of Yakah Aulang village.

Bābur describes their relief in terms reminiscent of his feelings when he reached safety after fleeing the Uzbeks besieging Samarqand in 1500.

> *Namāz-i khuftan*, at the time of the night prayer, we dismounted at Yakah Aulang. The Yakah Aulang people heard of our halting [and provided] warm houses, fat sheep, limitless green grass and hay and wood and dung for fire. Being delivered from such cold and snow, finding such a village and warm houses, being delivered from such hardship and suffering, finding thick bread and fat sheep, is a condition that those experiencing such hardships will know; it is a relief that those who have known such suffering will understand.[87]

After a day spent recuperating in the village Bābur and his men rode on through Bamian, crossed the Shibartu Pass about fifty miles northwest of Kabul and attacked, plundered and captured some Hazārahs, whom Bābur describes as bandits—*rāhzan ve sarkashlar*—and considered torturing them to death as an example. In the midst of this punitive attack, which yielded some badly needed sheep, cattle and horses, Bābur learned of an uprising in Kabul. It was led, he asserts by Muhammad Husayn Dughlat, previously the governor of Ura Tipa for Mahmūd Khan, and Sultān Sanjar Barlas, a nephew of his great aunt, Shāh Begim, a wife of Yūnas Khan. They and their predominantly Mongol troops had made Bābur's cousin, Ways Mīrzā, a brother of Baysunghur Mīrzā, "pādshāh," and seized the city, but had failed to take the citadel, where Bābur's loyalists were holding out. Little is known about Sultān Sanjar Barlas' earlier history, but Ways Mīrzā was with Bābur in 1504 when he interviewed and humiliated Khusrau Shāh on his way to Kabul, and Muhammad Husayn Dughlat had joined Bābur in Kabul in 1505. Both men were, like Bābur himself, refugees from the Uzbeks.

Bābur says Sultān Sanjar and Muhammad Husayn Dughlat justified their coup by spreading the rumor that Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muzaffar Mīrzā had imprisoned him in the Harat fortress. Writing about this episode his young cousin, Haydar Mīrzā Dughlat, tries to justify his father's role. Perhaps getting his information from Bābur's own account, he writes that reports had arrived in Kabul about Bābur's imprisonment, and thus it was

[87] BN-M, f. 195b.

reasonable to put Ways Mīrzā, another Tīmūrid, on the Kabul throne.[88] Yet given their earlier history and connections the three were likely moved by other more prosaic and personal motives than saving the Tīmūrid dynasty. After all, Bābur had chased Ways Mīrzā's brother, Baysunghur Mīrzā from Samarqand in 1497, indirectly leading to his death at the hands of Khusrau Shāh. Ways Mīrzā and Muhammad Husayn Dughlat had also been allies in Ferghanah, and with Mahmūd Khān's support and Mongol troops, had made an abortive march on Samarqand just before Bābur's second occupation of the city in 1500.[89] Whether their actions were reasonable or not—and Haydar Mīrzā did not arrive in Kabul until 1508—Bābur and his men surprised Sultān Sanjar Barlas, Ways Mīrzā, Muhammad Dughlat before they could occupy the citadel, and retook the city after a brief and not very bloody struggle.[90]

After quickly capturing all three men—Muhammad Husayn Dughlat was found hiding in a pile of bedding in the women's quarters—Bābur spared their lives, explicitly citing their family connections. Not only was Ways Mīrzā the grandson of Shāh Begim and Sultān Sanjar Barlas her nephew, but Muhammad Husayn Dughlat had also once been married to Khūbnigār Khanïm, Yūnas Khan's third daughter and therefore another of Bābur's maternal aunts. Muhammad Husayn Dughlat was allowed to go Khurasan, where he was later killed by Uzbeks, and Ways Mīrzā later left for Qandahar, but rejoined Bābur before he attacked the city. Even though he spared these men's lives Bābur speaks bitterly of their betrayal, which he interprets as a conspiracy of his maternal, that is Chaghatay relatives, despite Ways Mīrzā's paternal Tīmūrid genealogy.

In his mind his mother's kin had always treated his own immediate family badly. He recalls that during the several times he and his mother had been refugees in Mawarannahr, Shāh Begim, Ways Mīrzā and his mother Sultānnigār Khānïm had shown them neither compassion nor respect, not to speak of giving them lands or cattle. Yet Bābur had welcomed them to Kabul and out of respect

[88] TR-T, fs. 95b-97a. After Bābur's victories in India he appointed Ways Mīrzā's son, Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā, to the governorship of Kannauj. BN-M, f. 167b.

[89] BN-M, f. 76b.

[90] BN-M, fs. 198a-200a and TR-T, fs. 96b-97a.

for their *tabaqah,* their lineage, supported them with choice revenue assignments.[91] Not only had the three men found refuge with him but Shāh Begim and Yunas Khān's childless eldest daughter, Bābur's maternal aunt, Mihrnigār Khanïm, had also found safety in the city in 1505. Shāh Begim had been given the choice assignment of Paghmān, one of the best districts in Kabul province. Yet, Bābur argues, Shāh Begim herself must have known of Ways Mīrzā's treachery, for grandmother and grandson were constantly in each other's company in Kabul.

His belief that he had acted honorably while his mother's relatives had long ignored and then betrayed him obviously rankled deeply with Bābur, for he concludes his account of this incident with another of his autobiographical editorials. "This is not written," he notes, "with the intent of complaining. It is the truth that is written. It is not written with the idea of praising oneself. What is being documented truly happened. As I have taken it upon myself in this history to record every word and every act truthfully, consequently I have documented everything known about relatives, whether good or bad. I have recorded all the faults and virtues which are known of relations and strangers."[92] Bābur, of course, like most autobiographers, does not say he intends to list all his own faults and virtues. In fact while he frequently admits he made political or military mistakes he never admits to any of the multitudinous character flaws he notes in others, whether relatives or strangers! No wonder so many readers have found his personality so attractive, for if his text is taken at face value Bābur never once acted dishonorably or uncharitably toward anyone, especially not towards his Chaghatay or Tīmūrid relations.

Still for all his autobiographical bias Bābur offers a unique narrative insight into the life of an aspiring emperor, and following the account of the victory in Kabul he typically interrupts the

[91] BN-M, f. 200b.

[92] Ibid., f. 201a. The text has *ʿata agha* which has generally been translated in English as "father and elder brother." Yet Bābur had no elder brother. "Elder brother" might also refer to a cousin, but even that meaning doesn't really seem to fit in which Bābur criticizes both men and women. As it stands the phrase probably means simply relations in general. Perhaps *agha* is a copyist mistake for *ana,* in which case the phrase may be translated either as "mother and father" which was often used in certain old Turkic dialects/languages simply to mean "relatives." See Nadelyaev. *Drevnetyurkskiĭ Slovar',* 65.

political narrative, and describes an excursion to see the spring flowers and foliage in Baran, Chash Tupah and the Gulbahar or "spring-flower" hills north of Kabul. This is an area along the northern reaches of the Baran river known to a local unnamed poet he quotes as *jinnat* or "paradise."[93] The passage is one of many instances when Bābur expresses his delight at the natural beauty in the hills surrounding Kabul, however poor that city may have been as an imperial base. During this brief respite from the harsh realities of late-Tīmūrid life, he completed the ghazal which begins, "Petal upon petal my heart is like a rosebud," his poem echoing the aesthetic moment, but not describing exactly the flowers he saw.

Shortly after this idyllic picnic Bābur and his men resumed raiding. Carefully distinguishing between pacified or subject tribes such as the Muhmands, whom he refused to allow his men to plunder, he reports that the Tīmūrids now went after the Khiljī, camped on the edge of the Katawaz plain about twenty-five miles southeast of Ghazni.[94] Nāsir Mīrzā, who had so recently come crawling back to Bābur after his disaster in Badakhshan, joined this expedition. Bābur estimates that they seized nearly 100,000 sheep, although this figure seems staggeringly high. In fact the number is ridiculously improbable. It is even more difficult to count sheep than armies, and evidence from Bābur and others indicates that historians' estimates of troops are nearly always inflated, often wildly so. In any event after stealing many, many sheep Bābur and his men massacred the Khiljī who resisted the Tīmūrids' incursion and erected another "minaret" of their skulls. Then they held a classic Central Asian hunt on the Katawaz plain.

A Turco-Mongol custom, Chingīz Khan had institutionalized these customary hunts as training exercises for the massive encircling maneuvers his armies conducted on the treeless Mongolian steppe. In fact, while describing a hunt in 1502 that followed the yak-tail ceremony, Bābur mentions how conflicts over commands of the prestigious flanking positions in Mongol battle formations could be settled by appointments to lead those positions in hunts.[95] Forming a huge *charkah*, a Turco-Mongol hunting circle, Bābur and his men killed deer and wild asses -without counting them this time.

[93] Ibid., fs. 202a and 136.
[94] BN-M, fs. 203a-204.
[95] Ibid., f. 100b.

Bābur compliments himself on his prowess in killing the heaviest ass of all. He reports that Sherīm Tagha'ï, a maternal uncle of Bābur's mother and one of his companions in his flight to Kabul in 1504, was "amazed" by the plumpness of the animals they hunted.[96] Such hunting scenes are one of the staple subjects of Tīmūrid-Mughul miniature painting, with similar self-congratulation of Bābur's descendants then carefully recorded by sycophantic court historians.[97]

Hunting animals blended almost seamlessly into military campaigns as was true in Mawarannahr, and shortly after Bābur returned to Kabul he set off to seize Qandahar.[98] News had arrived of the Uzbek occupation of Harat in July 1507, and refugees from the city began arriving in Kabul a short time later. Between Kabul and Harat stood Qandahar, then held by Shāh Beg Arghun and Muhammad Muqīm Arghun, technically Mongol feudatories of the Harat Tīmūrids and sons of Zūʿn-Nūn Arghun, whom Bābur had chased from Kabul in 1504. Two years earlier Bābur had set out to take Qandahar, but cancelled the attack, because, he writes, he fell ill and an earthquake simultaneously struck Kabul.[99] Now in the spring of 1507 with the Uzbeks in Harat he badly needed Qandahar for the defense of Kabul—and presumably also for the agricultural and commercial wealth in and around the city. Bābur reports he received letters from the Arghuns about the Uzbek threat and asserts that "Muqīm himself had unmistakably sent him an *ʿarzdāsht,*" a "petition" implicitly acknowledging subordinate status, in which Muqīm invited him to the city.[100]

It is impossible to determine whether or not Muqīm and his brother intended to acknowledge Bābur's suzereignty in these letters. They may have first flattered Bābur's sovereign claims when he was still in Kabul and then changed their minds as his force approached Qandahar. Whatever their original intentions the Arghuns refused to give up the fort when Bābur and his force of

[96] Ibid., f. 204a.

[97] See among other numerous examples "Shah Jahan hunting" in Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), p. 84, no. 33.

[98] Apart from Bābur's detailed account his campaign is only briefly alluded to in other sources. The historian Rūzbihān Khunjī, for example, just mentions it briefly in the history he completed in 1509, the *Mihmān-nāmah-yi Bukhārā*, 184.

[99] Ibid., fs. 157a-b.

[100] Ibid., f. 207a.

nearly two thousand men neared the city. The Arghuns symbolically proclaimed their independence and implicitly rejected any notion of feudatory status by ostentatiously sealing one of their later letters in the middle of the document, in Bābur's view a *rustā'īānih* and *durusht* reply, a "crude and stupid answer," since only equals or superiors, he asserts, would so recklessly affix their seal in this way.[101]

As they marched west from Kabul Bābur and his men encountered a group of Indian merchants in Qalat, about eighty-four miles east of Qandahar, perhaps stalled there by news of the fighting in Harat. Remembering that his men suggested they should plunder anyone who was in a war zone, Bābur describes his reaction to their suggestion in terms that suggest he may have intended this passage as yet another designed to serve as political wisdom for his son Humāyūn. In it Bābur says he refused to allow his men to strip the merchants, and draws a parallel with his earlier denial of their request to plunder his Muhmand subjects. In the earlier instance, Bābur observes, they had acted justly and shortly afterwards God rewarded them with huge numbers of Khiljī sheep. On this occasion he told his men that God would likely give them similarly great benefits for sparing these blameless merchants, and notes he and his men merely took *pīshkish rasm*ï, "customary presents" from them, suggesting by the term *pīshkish*, the expected tributary gift of a subordinate to a superior.[102]

Bābur was not just splitting hairs; his men would have stripped the Indians bare. In mentioning this encounter he may have been thinking of his earlier testimonial to his father's concern for the property of the merchants who perished in the mountain snows east of Andijan. Even—or especially—the Mongols understood merchants' role in providing them with luxury goods and taxation revenues. Indeed, they formed trading partnerships with merchants known as *ortaqs*, just as Mughul nobles were to do later in India.[103] Bābur had already commented earlier in the Kabul section on the importance of commercial revenues for the city—its largest single source of income. He probably had in mind this revenue as the boon God would grant if he spared these merchants.

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[101] Ibid., f. 208a.
[102] BN-M, f. 207b.
[103] Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade* 1600-1750, 33 & n. 87.

As Bābur and his men marched from Qalat to Qandahar, Ways Mīrzā reappeared and joined Bābur along with another of Bābur's cousins, Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā, the son of Ulugh Beg Kābulī, the former Tīmūrid ruler of Kabul. ʿAbd al-Razzāq Mīrzā came out from Qandahar. The wife of Bābur's half-brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā, also arrived with her son to pay her respects, probably seeking Bābur's protection after the recent death of Jahāngīr Mīrzā, who had fallen ill and been left behind on Bābur's forced march from Harat to Kabul. Then as the army approached the outskirts of Qandahar a member of the Arghun family abandoned his family for Bābur's camp, and immediately went into action, unhorsing and beheading one of the defenders of the city.[104] The defection of one of the Arghun family was seen as a good omen, but it scarcely compensated for the temporary disappearance of nearly half of Bābur's estimated force of two thousand men on the outskirts of Qandahar. "Since leaving Qalat," Bābur recalls, "our men had suffered greatly from hunger," so about 1000 scattered to forage for food.[105] The passage not only reveals one compelling reason why Bābur's men wanted to plunder the Indian merchants, it also suggests the army lived entirely off the land, and that the "100,000" Khiljī sheep were back in Kabul, perhaps feeding the garrison there.

Just as half the army scattered to find food the Arghuns attacked with an estimated four to five thousand men, another troop estimate that cannot be proven but only suspected. Bābur and his remaining force turned to confront them. He describes with evident pleasure how he had organized his troops to win his first significant victory in a set-piece battle.

"Although our men were few," he writes:

> I prepared an excellent battle order. Never before had I arranged things so well. In the *khāsah tābīn*, the imperial troop, for which I selected all proven warriors, I appointed commanders of tens and fifties, [after] dividing them up into [sections] of tens and fifties. Each [section] of ten and each [section] of fifty stationed at the right and left, were prepared: they knew their positions, their orders and were ready for the onset of battle. Right and left flanks, right and left wings, right and left sides, right and left, mounted, formed up

[104] BN-M, fs. 208a-b.
[105] Ibid., f. 209a.

> without difficulty and without the help of a *tovachï*, an adjutant, each [section] was properly positioned and so rode forth.[106]

In an elaborate note Bābur carefully explains these divisions of his force. He identifies three major subsections: the *irawül* or vanguard, the *ghol*, the center, and the two wings, the *baranghar* or right wing and the *javanghar* or left wing. The *ghol* itself, he writes, is subdivided into two principal sections: the *khāsah tābīn*, the imperial troop, and two sides: an *ong qol*, a right arm and a *sol qol* or left arm. He further divides the *khāsah tābīn* into five subsections the *boy* or inner circle with its *ong*, right, and *sol*, left, and its *ong yan*, right side and *sol yan*, left side. However, when describing actual battles Bābur rarely identifies all these subsections but usually only names leading members of the vanguard, the center, and the right and left wings.

	irawül	
javanghar		baranghar
	ghol	
sol qol		ong qol
	khāsah tābīn	
sol yan		ong yan
	boy	
sol		ong
	chadavul[107]	

Bābur provides an exceptionally elaborate account of his commanders at Qandahar, which offers some insight into how he organized troops for such battles. Neither then nor at any other time in his life did he have a Chingīzid-like control over ferociously disciplined troops that he could position and order about at will. His campaigns were the outcome of continuous negotiation and ad hoc arrangements. He usually appointed as commanders whatever Tīmūrids were at hand, while groups of large, semi-independent

[106] Ibid., f. 209a. See also Arat's discussion and illustration of Bābur's *yasal* or battle order. BN-A, 664-666. Gerhard Doerfer describes not only the Tīmūr's *yasal* but that of other Central Asian and Iranian armies—the Qarakhanid, Mongols and Safavids, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1975), IV, no. 1791, pp. 82-92.

[107] Ibid., 209b.

Mongol contingents fought together. At Qandahar Bābur himself commanded the center and Tīmūrids were members and presumably at least nominal commanders of the vanguard and the right and left wings. Apart from Tīmūrids, longtime family retainers of various lineages constituted the leadership of the vanguard and left wings, with major Mongol contingents concentrated on the right wing. Nāsir Mīrzā was in the vanguard, Ways Mīrzā the right wing and Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā, Ulugh Beg Kābulī's son, the left wing. The vanguard also contained Sayyid Qāsim, a Jalayir Mongol and the Lord of Bābur's gate, Baba Aughuli, a man who had been in the vanguard with Sayyid Qāsim when raiding Afghāns in 1505, and Muhibb ʿAlī Qurchi, one of Khusrau Shāh's former men whom Bābur most admired.

In the right wing with Ways Mīrzā were important Mongol forces. They seem to have fought well at Qandahar, but four years later in 1511 when given the chance many showed they preferred to be led by a Mongol *khan* rather than a Tīmūrid, no doubt reinforcing Bābur's bitter feelings about his maternal relatives and Mongols in general.[108] Two of these men were his mother's kin: Sherim Taghaʾï, one of his mother's maternal uncles and in 1494, one of Bābur's protectors when his father died, and Yarik Taghaʾï, by his name another of his mother's relatives and one of the small number of men to remain with Bābur in 1498, when he lost both Samarqand and Andijan. Then there was the leader of the Mongol Begchik *tuman*: Ayūb Beg Begchik, a man who evidently brought a large contingent of Mongol troops with him to Kabul. He had formerly been an adherent of Bābur's maternal uncle, Mahmūd Khan, and commander of the *tuman*—a man who in 1502 claimed by hereditary Mongol tradition the leadership of the right wing of Mahmūd Khān's army. Ayūb Beg's two brothers, Muhammad Beg and Ibrahim Beg, were also present, although Ibrahim's relationship with Ayūb is not clear, as he had served Bābur since 1497 and remained with him during his Indian campaigns. In the left wing the most important figures after the Tīmūrid Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā were Qāsim Beg Qauchin, one of ʿUmar Shaykh's commanders and long one of Bābur's most trusted men, and his sons Tengri-Birdi and Qambar ʿAlī. In the *boy* and immediately to its left and right were a group of lesser men, *ichkis*, none of whom, Bābur

[108] TR-T, f. 119b.

writes, had yet been appointed as *beg*s or senior commanders. He identifies some as Mongols, a few as "Turkmen"; many others had been serving Bābur since his campaigns in Mawarannahr. Some, such as Sultān Muhammad Duldai Barlas, survived to become major figures during the next two decades.

Bābur defeated his Arghun opponents in a pitched cavalry battle in which the Mongol right wing apparently played a critical role. In fact, by the unmistakable evidence of his subsequent narrative, Mongol cavalry contingents were critical to all his subsequent victories—over the Uzbeks at Pul-i Sangin in 1511, the Lūdīs at Panipat in 1526 and the Rajputs at Kanwah in 1527. The swift encircling movements that Mongols practiced in their frequent hunting exercises apparently were used to great effect in each case. Apart from describing the disposition of his forces as he does at Qandahar, Bābur never offers a systematic assessment of his tactics or the relative value of any of his commanders or troops. He does, though, mention that in the traditional Mongol battle formation the right and left wings were the most prestigious commands, and it is impossible to overlook the prominence he gives to the Mongol contingents fighting on the wings on each occasion.[109] Mongols may have betrayed him during his early campaigns in Ferghanah and then again in 1512 after the Uzbeks had driven him from Samarqand for the final time, but they more than any other *naukar*s may have been responsible for his pivotal triumphs in India.

Following the Qandahar battle Bābur and his troops entered the city where they were stunned with the riches they found. "Such a huge amount of silver coin had never been seen in those provinces," Bābur writes,[110] and he appointed *bakhshī*s, scribes or accountants to inventory the Arghun brothers' two treasuries. The fact that each Arghun had a "treasury" reflects the individual/personal nature of their rule in Qandahar, even though they were at least technically subordinate to the Harat government.[111] By this evidence it is apparent that the Arghun brothers were autonomous rulers who extracted local wealth largely for their own purposes

[109] BN-M, f. 100b.

[110] BN-M, f. 212a.

[111] Despite the wealth of information on Harat, this Tīmūrid city-state's political character and degree of control over outlying cities and districts is still largely unexplored.

and not, primarily, for their nominal Tīmūrid overlords. The scale of their accumulation astonished Bābur when some days later he returned to his camp outside of the city and found all the Arghun riches displayed. "This was not the camp. What had happened to the place we knew?" Bābur remembers thinking.[112] There were beautiful thoroughbred horses, camels, mules, textiles and, of course, bags of silver *tangahs*. Nāsir Mīrzā, whom Bābur appointed to govern Qandahar, had already appropriated a camel load of *tangah*s for himself, which his older brother conceded to him. On the march back to Kabul Bābur distributed the remainder of the booty to his officers for their own support and their soldier's pay. He mentions in passing that no one paid any attention to the sheep that had been seized.

In leaving Nāsir Mīrzā behind in Qandahar Bābur placed his brother in a situation where he feared to stay himself, that is in Shībānī Khān's immediate path. Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā was only slightly less exposed to danger just east in Qalat, which Bābur granted him after the Qandahar victory. Qāsim Beg Qauchin sensibly advised Bābur it was dangerous to stay in Qandahar. He was quickly proven correct for news arrived in Kabul sometime shortly after Bābur returned there in triumph that Shībānī Khan had reached Qandahar and forced his way into the city, leaving only the citadel in Nāsir Mīrzā's hands. He was invited there, writes Bābur, by the defeated Arghuns. News of the Uzbek siege arrived sometime in August or early September and created panic in Kabul. Writing with the remarkable candor that makes his memoirs such a unique source, Bābur describes himself to have been paralyzed with indecision.

> The *beg*s were summoned [and[a counsel held. These were among the matters discussed, that such a foreign people as the Uzbeks and such an old enemy as Shībānī Khan had seized all of the provinces of Tīmūr Beg's descendants. Of Turk and Chaghatay who survived in corners and on the margins, they either willingly or unwillingly joined the Uzbeks. I alone remained in Kabul, the enemy very strong, ourselves extremely weak. Neither reconciliation nor resistance was possible. In the face of such power and strength we had to think of some place for ourselves. Given this brief opportunity it was imperative to get further away from this powerful enemy. Either the

[112] Ibid., f. 212a.

> Badakhshan side or the Hindustan direction had to be chosen. It was imperative to decide on a direction.[113]

Qāsim Beg Qauchin and Sherīm Tagha'ï suggested Badakhshan, where no strong figure then ruled, but Bābur opted for Hindustan.

In 1507 Bābur did not plan to invade India, but was desperately looking for a refuge, some place to hide in the Afghān-Indian borderlands. He left behind in Kabul Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā, who had fled from Qalat and arrived in Kabul just as Bābur marched out, a sign of his desperation as Abd al-Razzāq might reasonably have claimed the city as his father's appanage. Given the ruthless politics of the time it is remarkable that Abd al-Razzāq did not seize Kabul for himself, particularly as Bābur himself remarks that the Afghāns thought he was abandoning the city for India.[114] Bābur also gave permission for Ways Mīrzā and his grandmother, Shāh Begim, to go to Badakhshan. They hoped to exploit Shāh Begim's lineage as a descendant of the ancient kings of Badakhshan to create a new Tīmūrid state there. As he marched eastward from Kabul toward Lamghanat in September 1507 Bābur may have recalled his *qazaqlïq* days in Ferghanah, for once again he was perilously close to loosing both his kingdom and very possibly his life as well.

Harassed by Afghāns who apparently smelled blood in the political water as he retreated from Kabul, Bābur's force marched east and eventually reached Adinahpur in Ningnahar district. The desperate, unplanned character of this march is reflected in Bābur's narrative when he writes that before arriving at Adinahpur "No thought had been given of a place to camp. Nothing had been settled, neither a place to go nor a site for camp."[115] This sense of panic-stricken flight is reinforced by Bābur's next comment, that his men now had to forage for food, raiding Kāfir rice fields in nearby ʿAlishang district. They had apparently ridden out with no supplies, none of the plunder they had laboriously acquired over the summer. In the midst of describing these desultory wanderings, Bābur then says, writing in the enigmatic passive, that it "was not considered" to be a good idea to go to Hindustan and some men were sent back to Kabul with unspecified messages.

113 Ibid., f. 213a.
114 Ibid., f. 213b.
115 Ibid., f. 214a.

By now it was winter and as Bābur and his men continued to ride from village to village in the Afghān countryside east of Kabul, Nāsir Mīrzā sent news that Shībānī Khan had withdrawn from Qandahar because a commander of a fortress near Harat where Shībānī's haram was lodged, had rebelled. With the immediate Uzbek threat over Bābur returned to Kabul, bestowed Ghazni on Nāsir Mīrzā, Ningnahar district on Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā and had himself proclaimed *pādshāh*. "Until this time," he writes, "Tīmūr Beg's descendants had been called *mīrzā* even when they were sovereign. Now I ordered that [people] should call me *pādshāh*."[116] By taking this Iranian title Bābur seems to have been claiming an imperial sovereignty far greater than the notion of a Tīmūrid appanage, however his modest his possessions at this time. Then on 6 March 1508 his son and eventual heir Humāyūn was born and with him a new Tīmūrid dynasty.

With Shībānī Khan withdrawn, the Harat Tīmūrids dead or dispersed and the birth of a son Bābur must have enjoyed at least a fleeting sense of well-being in the spring of 1508. Perhaps this also prompted him sometime in 1508/09 to have his new imperial title cut into rock south of Kabul near a place where he used to drink, a place known in his great-grandson's day as *takht-i shāh*, the throne of the king. The inscription reads, according to his great-grandson, Jahāngīr "The seat of the king, the asylum of the world, Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur, son of ʿUmar Shaykh Gürgan."[117] Yet the fragile reality of his situation was substantially unchanged. At this stage in his career his assumption of the *pādshāh* title represented an aspiration rather than a symbol of political reality. Shībānī Khan still dominated Khurasan while Bābur exercised limited control in Kabul province, with Nāsir Mīrzā and Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā drawing revenues from two of its important districts and many if not most of the Afghān tribes and the Kāfirs autonomous or openly hostile. Beyond the potential Uzbek threat and the problematic nature of his Afghān state, there was the constant problem of unreliable military contingents. Some of those who fought with him in Qandahar rebelled in May or June of this year.

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[116] Ibid., f. 215a.

[117] TJ, I, 108. As is mentioned in the Introduction, no coins of Bābur's period of residence in Kabul between 1504 and 1525 are known to be extant. These could give additional insight into his imperial titles—as well as data about economic and commercial policies.

Bābur mentions that some of Khusrau Shāh's former Mongol contingents, as well as some Chaghatays formerly serving Khusrau Shāh, united with several thousand Turkmāns gathered outside Kabul, where they were joined by Abd al-Razzāq Mīrzā. According to his Mongol cousin Haydar Mīrzā, who arrived in the city as a young boy of ten about a year and a half later, in November/December 1509, Bābur with 500 men defeated these Mongol, Chaghatay and Turkoman contingents in an intense struggle, Bābur himself wounding "five different champions of the enemy."[118] ʿAbd al-Razzāq was captured and pardoned—only to be executed later after another "rebellion"—and relative peace returned to Kabul for the next year and a half. Nonetheless, Haydar Mīrzā's estimate of the number of reliable troops Bābur commanded in 1508 once again underlines his fundamentally precarious position—vis-à-vis Shībānī Khan, the newly arisen Safavid power in Iran or the Lūdī Afghāns ruling in Delhi and Agra, all of whom could muster ten times that number of troops at relatively short notice. His survival was due mainly to Kabul's isolation, its location on the borderlands of Uzbek, Safavid and Lūdī territories. Anyone thinking about Bābur's probable future at this time could reasonably have concluded that Tīmūrid Kabul was an anachronism, a doomed political artifact.

Literary Interregnum: 1508-1519

Just as Bābur begins to describe the Mughul-Turkmān rebellion of 1508, his narrative breaks off and does not resume until 1519. This gap and a subsequent one for the six-year period between 1519 and 1525 leaves the biographer of Bābur deprived of the personal details that distinguish a life from a chronicle. It is not possible to continue the biography for these years, but only to sketch a brief, largely lifeless political history. Information about Bābur's career for the decade from 1508-19 comes from brief references to him in Persian chronicles and the first-hand information of Haydar Mīrzā, who by his own testimony was almost constantly in Bābur's com-

[118] TR-T, f. 98b. Haydar Mīrzā says he left Badakhshan, where he stayed for about a year with Ways Mirza, in Rajab 915 (October, 1509). TR-T, fs. 112a-114a, and stayed with Bābur until sometime in 918 (1512). Ibid., f. 114a.

pany for about three years between October/November of 1509 and September/October, 1512. Haydar Mīrzā at least is able to give first-hand accounts of conditions in Kabul in 1509-10 and Bābur's defeat of Uzbek armies and his third entry in Samarqand in 1511. Yet he was a young boy at the time, and even his most valuable descriptions do not compensate for loss of Bābur's unique narrative, with its emotion-laden content. Khwāndamīr, the most ambitious and thorough of all the court historians writing about this period, has little original to say about these events and almost nothing of importance to relate about Babur's last Samarqand campaign. As the Soviet scholar Azimdzhanova observes: "Usually loquacious and generous with details, the author of the *Habīb al-siyar* upon reaching the events of 1511 becomes restrained and laconic....The point is that Khwāndamīr, speaking about Bābur's life, bases it mainly on his memoirs."[119] Yet while most histories offer only fragmentary political narratives they nonetheless reveal an unmistakable continuity of these years with Bābur's earlier life, both in his preoccupation with Tīmūrid interests in Mawarannahr and as well as his astonishing resilience in the face of repeated military disasters.[120]

Samarqand: the Last Hurrah

In December 1510 Ways Mīrzā wrote to Bābur from his base near Qunduz, east of Balkh, that Shībānī Khan had been killed in a battle with Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī. According to the Safavid historian Iskandar Beg Munshī, Ways Mīrzā had gone to meet Shāh Ismāʿīl at the celebration of the Safavid victory in Harat.[121] Ways Mīrzā then returned to Badakhshan and invited Bābur north to form a Tīmūrid alliance to retake Mawarannahr. Bābur hurriedly left Kabul in late December with his wives and children, taking the only route not then blocked by snow, presumably the Shibartu pass leading into Bamian.[122] Ways Mīrzā might not have been so eager

[119] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii*, 85-6.

[120] S. A. Azimdzhanova discusses the sources available for the years 1510-1512 of Bābur's life, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i Indii*, 85-87.

[121] Eskandar Beg Munshī, *History of Shāh ʿAbbas the Great*, I, 63.

[122] His daughter, Gulbadan Begim, names some of those Bābur took with him on his march north. HN, f. 7b. Her phrase is: *ahl u ʿiyāl u farzand.*

to see his cousin except that his grandmother's lineage had not given him legitimacy; he was then living in poverty in the small fortress of Zafar hemmed in by Uzbeks, who controlled the wealthy agricultural lowlands, and hostile Badakhshānī natives.[123] When Bābur arrived in Qunduz in February/March 1511 he found that Ways Mīrzā had been joined by an estimated 20,000 Mongols. These men had originally been contingents of Bābur's Chaghatay uncles; Shībānī Khan had forcibly resettled them in Khurasan after he had defeated the Chaghatay Khāns at Akhsi in the spring of 1503. With Shībānī's death they were free to return east and Ways Mīrzā may have seen them as the basis of an anti-Uzbek army. Bolstered by these Mongol reinforcements Bābur and Ways Mīrzā crossed the Oxus in the "late winter," 1511 to attack important Uzbek forces in Hisar, probably because this would open the road to Samarqand. However, after both armies failed to locate the other in the mountainous terrain east of Hisar near Waksh, the Uzbeks retired back to Hisar and Bābur and Ways Mīrzā returned to Qunduz.

At this juncture Bābur once again had to confront Mongol unrest as his new Mongol allies and old Mongol retainers, including Sherim Tagha'ī, conspired to set Bābur aside in favor of Saʿīd Khan, a son of Bābur's maternal uncle, Kichik Khan, the "rustic" but "good Muslim" Mongol uncle who had entered Ferghanah in 1502. However, Saʿīd Khan, who had come to Kabul as a refugee in 1508 and enjoyed Bābur's hospitality there until he marched with him to Qunduz, refused to betray Bābur.[124] Perhaps he really was grateful for Bābur's help and the two carefree years he was able to spend in Kabul drinking and carrying on love affairs—once with one of the Begchik princes.[125] Instead he opted to lead the Mongols to Ferghanah, recently abandoned by the Uzbeks.[126] Bābur writes that he appointed him Khan and sent him to Ferghanah, but he may only have ratified a fait accompli in order to rid himself of the Mongols.[127] Saʿīd Khan left for Ferghanah on 13 May 1511.[128] Sherim Tagha'ī and Ayūb Begchik stayed behind with Bābur, but

[123] TR-T, fs. 112a-113a.
[124] Ibid., f. 119b.
[125] TR-T, f. 111a "...az amīrzādehha-yi Mughul-i Begchīknezhādi..."
[126] TR-T, f. 119b.
[127] BN-M, f. 200b.
[128] TR-T, f. 127b.

their subsequent actions suggest their loyalty was always pragmatic and conditional. They too, as with the Mongol forces who joined Saʿīd Khan, may always have preferred to serve a Chingīzid *khan* rather than a Tīmūrid *mīrzā*.

Bābur and his allies planned to move on Hisar, the strongly fortified city north of the Oxus formerly controlled by Khusrau Shāh, but now held by two important Uzbek leaders. Haydar Mīrzā estimates that the "Chaghatays," that is Bābur's forces, had no more than 5,000 men in Qunduz, but most of those must have joined Bābur after he arrived. He himself says that he had only about 2,000 men when he marched on Qandahar, and it seems unlikely he could have brought more than that number over the mountains in the winter to Qunduz. Haydar Mīrzā is probably referring to the total Bābur commanded when he marched on Hisar. These included 3,000 Mongols from Khurasan who stayed with Bābur when the rest went to Ferghanah, and they were supplemented by an Iranian force of unspecified size that Shāh Ismāʿīl sent to aid Bābur. The latter arrived with Ways Mīrzā, whom Bābur had dispatched as an emissary to Shāh Ismāʿīl—along with pledges of *itāʿat va inqiyād*, fealty and submission.[129] He did so after the Safavid Shāh had sent to Bābur as a token of friendship, his sister, Khanzādah Begim, whom Bābur had abandoned in Samarqand when he fled the city in 1501. She had been married to and later divorced by Shībānī Khan and married by Shībānī to an influential sayyid, who had in turn died in the Safavid-Uzbek battle at Merv in which Shībānī also died. She was discovered by Ismāʿīl in the Uzbek camp following the battle.

By the evidence of later events Bābur's "fealty and submission" included his acceptance of Safavid sovereignty in Mawarannahr and public recognition of Ismāʿīl's Shīʿī Muslim faith. Later when the allies succeeded in taking Samarqand Shāh Ismāʿīl's name was read in the Friday prayer and his Shīʿī formula stamped on coins.[130] The most irrefutable evidence of the latter concession is an undated

[129] Ibid., f. 118a.

[130] In his account of the period the historian Khwāndamīr, who lived mainly in Harat and wrote for the Safavids until he emigrated to India in 1528, says that Bābur agreed to acknowledge Safavid sovereignty in these traditional Islamic ways. *Habīb al-siyar*, IV, 524. Tīmūrid-Mughul historians either gloss over or deny this, but numismatic evidence and the eyewitness accounts of Haydar Mīrzā and Rūzbihān Khunjī make Bābur's concession certain. For a useful discussion of this probably needless historiographical controversy see the observation of N. Elias in

coin presumably struck after Samarqand was taken that gives Bābur's title merely as Sultān Bābur Bahādur and following the *Shāhada*, *ʿAlī walī Allah*, with the names of the twelve imams inscribed around the edge.[131] It is also equally obvious from what Bābur writes about his own faith that this can never have been more than a political concession wrung from him by the far more powerful Iranians. Indeed, his actions are not the least surprising in view of the fact that at least three other Tīmūrids minted Shīʿī coins when it served their political purposes.[132] Then too whenever Bābur speaks about the Shīʿī faith in his memoirs he does so with revulsion and contempt. Thus in the midst of praising the personality of his much admired Tīmūrid cousin Baysunghur Mīrzā, he remarks that his cousin's teacher "was reported to have been a Shīʿa" and as a result "Baysunghur Mīrzā was similarly infected."[133] Whether or not Baysunghur Mīrzā was a Shīʿa is not the issue here—and Bābur is careful to indicate that this was all hearsay. What is significant is the revulsion with which Bābur speaks of the Shīʿī faith, as an "infection" and also as a "wicked belief," that his cousin renounced and became *pāk*, pure or orthodox.

Sometime after Saʿīd Khan left for Ferghanah, Bābur and Ways Mīrzā again marched toward Hisar, where a formidable coalition of Uzbek commanders awaited them.[134] The forces first confronted each other on the Surkhab or Wakhsh river due east of Hisar at the Pul-i Sangin, the "Stone Bridge" where Bābur's ancestor, Tīmūr, had once won a decisive victory.[135] After facing each other across

the Denison Ross translation of Haydar Mīrzā's memoirs. TR-R, pp. 246-7 & n. 2.

[131] Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Coins of the Moghul Emperors of Hindustan in the British Museum* (Delhi: Inter-India Publications, repr. 1983), 5. Not surprisingly very few of these coins survive. Some of are overstruck coins of Shāh Rukh.

[132] These Tīmūrids were, Abū Saʿīd, Husayn Bayqara and Abu'l Qāsim Bābur. See R. E. Darley-Doran, "Tīmūrids," "Numismatics," *EI2* 10, fascs. 171-72, 525.

[133] BN-M, f. 68b.

[134] The history of Hisar, including photographs and plans of the fortress and religious buildings is given the E. Davidovich and A. Mukhtarov, *Stranitsy Istorii Gissara* (Dushambe: "Irfon," 1969).

[135] The bridge is described by W. Barthold, *Turkistan Down to the Mongol Invasion* 3rd ed. (London: Luzac for E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1968), 69. It is located on the map accompanying the Elias and Ross edition of Haydar Mīrzā's memoirs, due east of Hisar.

the river for a month Uzbek forces swam the river downstream in an apparent flanking maneuver, causing Bābur's outnumbered army to march into defensible positions in the mountainous terrain on the left bank of the river. If Haydar Mīrzā's first-hand account is accurate, and it is the only one known to exist, the battle was fought and won by the left wing, where Ways Mīrzā had been reinforced by 3,000 of the Mongols who had come from Khurasan. These Mongols had remained behind and joined Bābur's coalition when others had gone to Ferghanah.

Some and perhaps most of these latter troops were, Haydar Mīrzā writes, men who were hereditary retainers of his recently executed father and they may have stayed behind in Qunduz because of these ties rather than Bābur's influence. Indeed, it may have occurred to Bābur when Haydar Mīrzā first came as a refugee to Kabul two years earlier that a Dughlat, a highly placed and now fatherless Mongol boy, might ultimately be useful to him. One of these Mongols, Jan Beg Atekeh, was Haydar Mīrzā's *pedar-i riżā'ī*, his foster-father, and as this battle began the troops which Jan Beg Atekeh led seem to have been nominally under Haydar Mīrzā's command. At least, writes Haydar Mīrzā, Bābur didn't recognize these men, although they were part of his newly-formed coalition. Using a phrase lifted from the florid Persian historical texts he admired, Haydar Mīrzā describes this encounter saying, "Meanwhile, his [Bābur's] auspicious glance fell upon this troop [and] he asked, 'What group are they?'" Learning they were Haydar Mīrzā's *mulāzamān*, his "retainers," Bābur told his ten year-old cousin he was too young to go into battle himself. He kept Haydar Mīrzā beside him and sent the Mongols off to reinforce Ways Mīrzā.[136]

The fact that Bābur didn't even recognize this Mongol contingent is yet another illustration of the evanescent nature of the coalitions that formed, dissolved and reformed in different combinations as Tīmūrids, Mongols and Uzbeks struggled for supremacy or simple survival in the early sixteenth century. Haydar Mīrzā makes it quite clear that these Mongols owed their primary loyalty to him as one of the few survivors of the Dughlat clan. In all probability they joined Bābur only because his young cousin accompanied him. Yet in Haydar Mīrzā's eyewitness account of the

[136] TR-T, f. 120a.

battle Jan Beg Atekeh's contingent did the crucial fighting which ensured victory in this battle, just as other Mongols had played a crucial role at Qandahar and were to do in India. He reports that Bābur took up position across a narrow track in the hills several miles from the Surkhab river with Ways Mīrzā commanding the left wing on the other side of deep ravine. Unable to force Bābur's position, the Uzbeks sent a force Haydar Mīrzā estimates at 10,000 men in a flanking attack over a hill to Bābur's left where Ways Mīrzā was positioned.

Jan Beg Atekeh and his Mongol horsemen arrived there just as Ways Mīrzā was being overrun and forced the Uzbeks back. Fighting then ebbed back and forth on the left wing until evening when Bābur's own men, who had not been directly involved in combat, decided to dismount and make camp for the evening in their positions. Haydar Mīrzā remembers that Hamza Sultān, the senior Uzbek who commanded the center opposite Bābur's lines, now decided to retire back to the river to ensure a water supply for his men. Seeing this, the Uzbeks fighting Jan Beg Atakah's Mongols turned to retreat, which in turn precipitated a chaotic melee in the Uzbek center. "By the time of the evening prayer" Hamzah Sultān and two other Uzbek leaders were captured and brought before Bābur, and "What Shībānī had done to the Mongol *khaqans* and the Chaghatay Sultāns [the Tīmūrid Mīrzās] Bābur now did to them."[137]

The remnants of the Uzbek army were chased up to the "Iron Gate," the narrow defile "a mile long, and at times only a few paces in width" almost due west of Hisar that gave access through the mountains to Shahr-i sabz and the road to Samarqand.[138] Then Bābur and his troops regrouped at Hisar, where they were joined by Iranian reinforcements and other unidentified troops "from all parts of the world."[139] Nearly sixty thousand men, writes Haydar Mīrzā, marched to confront the main Uzbek forces in Samarqand and Bukhara.[140]

137 TR-T f. 120b.

138 This "Iron Gate," as distinguished from that near the Caspian Sea is described in 1404 by Clavijo in great detail. *Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane*, 204-06 and by the late-Victorian English geologist W. Rickmer Rickmers in his fascinating volume on the geology of the region *The Duab of Turkistan*, 476-77.

139 Ibid., f. 120b.

140 TR-T, f. 120b.

Deciding to bypass strongly defended Samarqand and the nearby fortress of Qarshi, Bābur and his Iranian allies opted to attack the more lightly defended Bukhara. In the words of Haydar Mīrzā who, pouring the ink of metaphor onto the pages of history, writes: they "placed the foot of pursuit into the stirrup of haste" and rode day and night to reach the city.[141] It is extremely unlikely that Bābur's newly enlarged army really constituted anything close to 60,000 men, and the later Safavid historian Iskandar Beg Munshī says only that Shāh Ismāʿīl sent two experienced detachments to join Bābur.[142] However, this force was substantial enough to send Bukhārā's Uzbek defenders fleeing west into the "Turkistan" desert, and shortly afterwards those in Samarqand also abandoned that city for the safety of the desert. Bābur then gratefully dismissed his Iranian allies turned back to Samarqand.[143] According to Haydar Mīrzā, who accompanied him on the march and was apparently with Bābur when he re-entered Samarqand itself on 8 October 1511,

> The inhabitants of Mawarannahr belonging to the great and the general populace, whether notables and aristocrats or townspeople and peasants, all were ecstatic at the radiant approach of the *pādshāh*. While the nobility hurried forth to greet [him] other people were busy with the decoration of the city.[144]

Perhaps sophisticated Samarqand inhabitants had been offended as Bābur had been by Uzbek crudity, such as the offensive behavior and second-rate poetry Shībānī Khan had exhibited in Harat. Yet they were soon to be alienated even more profoundly from their Tīmūrid liberator when they discovered Bābur had agreed to patronize Shīʿī Islam in exchange for Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī's support. Contemporary and subsequent historical accounts agree that Bābur asked for Shāh Ismāʿīl's help to retake Mawarannahr, and that after reoccupying Samarqand he had a Shīʿī *khutbah* recited in Shāh Ismāʿīl's name.[145] However, it is only Haydar Mīrzā who provides a detailed and reflective account of these events.

In his first-hand account, although one written about three

[141] Ibid., f. 121a.
[142] Iskandar Beg Munshī, H*istory of Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, I, 64-65.
[143] TR-T, f. 121a.
[144] Ibid., f. 121a.
[145] Iskandar Beg Munshī gives brief, a matter-of-fact account of Bābur's agreement with Shāh Ismāʿīl. *History of Shāh ʿAbbas the Great*, I, 64-65.

decades later when he ruled Kashmir, Haydar Mīrzā implies that the people of Samarqand knew before his cousin reached the city that Bābur had outwardly compromised his Sunni faith as a condition of Shāh Ismāʾīl's help. He also explicitly indicates that this was a mere expedient by saying "in time of necessity...[Bābur] donned the clothes of the Qizilbash," before he entered the city.[146] Samarqandis knew, that is, he had accepted the Twelver Shīʿī Islam of Shāh Ismāʾīl and his largely Turkic followers who were known as the Qizilbash, literally "redheads," because they wore special turbans that symbolized their faith. In this instance Haydar Mīrzā may not have been writing in the metaphorical prose style he tried to master; on the march from Hisar Bābur may actually have begun wearing the Qizilbash turban to placate his Iranian allies whose troops probably outnumbered his by ten to one.[147] Haydar Mīrzā says that the Samarqand populace nonetheless expected Bābur to renounce "this schism which verged on heresy" the moment he ascended the throne and assumed he would replace his Qizilbash clothes with "the crown of Muhammad's tradition," that is he would reaffirm his Sunni Islamic faith.[148] However, the Samarqandis' expectations were not realized. Bābur felt he could not survive without Shāh Ismāʿīl's help and so "procrastinated and dissimulated with the Qizilbash." "For this reason," Haydar Mīrzā explains, "the intense longing which the people of Mawarannahr had felt for the *pādshāh* in his absence was shattered."[149]

Should Haydar Mīrzā's account be taken at face value? In a subsequent chapter he pauses briefly to outline his own rules of evidence, saying in essence he will only briefly record hearsay for fear of inaccuracy but will describe—presumably at greater length—those events he witnessed personally.[150] He was an eyewitness to Bābur's life from the fall of 1509 to the fall of 1512, and says that Bābur kept him constantly at his side. Bābur himself mentions only that his young cousin was with him for "three or four years after the Uzbeks killed his father."[151] There is no reason to doubt some

[146] Ibid., f. 121a.
[147] Based upon Haydar Mīrzā's estimate that Bābur had a total of around 5,000 troops in Qunduz before he marched on Hisār.
[148] TR-T, f. 121a.
[149] Ibid., f. 121b.
[150] Ibid., f. 124a.
[151] BN-M, f. 11a.

of his general statements about Bābur's religious affect, which he probably witnessed. However, when it comes to other matters such as troops estimates his opinion or that of any writer must always be viewed skeptically, whatever their age or experience.

It is obvious from Haydar Mīrzā's account of the Hisar battle that Bābur could not have known precisely how many troops he technically had under his command. Bābur himself admits that even when he ordered his men to count the troops who crossed the Indus in 1526 he later learned the figure of 12,000 was exaggerated—and that many of those who did cross were not troops but merchants, religious students or camp followers![152] His statement should be the basis for a general rule of evidence in evaluating troop figures in pre-modern warfare, whether in Central Asia or elsewhere. Unless Bābur, Haydar Mīrzā or any other author says that *tovachī*s, adjutants, or *bakhshīs*, accountants, actually counted the men in a particular army these authors' estimates should be taken with a grain of salt. Larger figures should always be viewed more skeptically. In describing the retreat of his uncle, Saʿīd Khan, from Ferghanah to Kāshgar in 1514, Haydar Mīrzā reports that Saʿīd Khan stationed *tovachī*s to count his troops as they passed. Haydar Mīrzā, who was present, reports that the *tovachī*s counted 4,700 men and then identifies the leading amirs and clans who comprised the army.[153] This kind if specific, first-hand information makes his earlier, unsubstantiated estimates of 60,000 Iranian troops seem highly unlikely if not totally absurd.

Apart from notoriously inaccurate troops estimates the question remains whether even the most intelligent and scrupulous observer who is writing thirty years after events he witnessed when he was nine or ten could have retained an accurate picture of what he saw or understood the significance of the events at the time? Lacking a

[152] Describing crossing the Indus in 1526 Bābur writes that "*bakhshīs* and *diwans*," literally paymasters and accountants, were assigned to "record all the soldiers names." He reports that they counted 12,000 men. He does not use the term *tovachī*. BN-M, f. 254a. Yet in describing the battle of Panipat itself in f. 264 he says that he had fewer men than previously estimated. He may mean that he had fewer fighting men, for in f. 269b Bābur says that there were 12,000 men with him, but these included merchants and servants. Haydar Mīrzā, who was nowhere near Panipat in 1526, says that Bābur won the battle with 10,000 troops. However, given Bābur's comments, this figure is probably close to the actual figure of troops Bābur commanded in 1526. TR-T, f. 204a.

[153] TR-T, f. 142b.

comparable contemporary source there is no way to verify Haydar Mīrzā's recollections; Bābur's own memoirs of his early years present a similar problem, as he began active campaigning in his twelfth year. Still, boys became men quickly in the male-dominated Turco-Mongol society of Mawarannahr. An example of the precocity of young boys in early nineteenth century Afghanistan probably serves as a valid analogy for Bābur and Haydar Mīrzā's own upbringing.

Writing of the young sons of the Durrānī chief Sultān Muhammad Khan, the acute British observer Alexander Burnes argues that their maturity, which he observed in Peshawar in the winter of 1831, "Was no doubt attributable to their earlier introduction into the society of grown-up people." Burnes describes a system similar to the Tīmūrid appanage institution, which had Bābur in his twelfth year, for example, living with his *beg atekeh* in Andijan, rather than with his father in Akhsi. Burnes says of these young Durrānīs:

> When a boy has arrived at his twelfth year, a separate establishment is maintained here on his account; and, long before that time of life he is prohibited from frequenting his mother's apartments but on certain occasions .... I expressed some surprise to hear that he [the eldest son] had a house of his own. 'What!' replied the youth, 'Would you have me imbibe the disposition of a woman, when I am the son of a Dooranee?'[154]

Given their traumatic youthful experiences and military adventures it also seems safe to assume that both Haydar Mīrzā and Bābur both encountered and remembered far more of politics and war than protected children from later eras. Then too as is so often the case with childhood memories, their own original recollections of events they experienced may have become indistinguishable from accounts of these same incidents they heard from adults, men such as Haydar Mīrzā's foster-father, Jan Beg Atekeh, who was still fighting with Haydar Mīrzā in Tibet in 1533.[155] How many times must Jan Beg and Haydar Mīrzā together have recounted battles

[154] Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, II, 86-87.

[155] TR-T, f. 178a. A recent measured, scholarly account of the problems of recollection is Daniel L. Schacter's, *The Seven Sins of Memory, How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

and campaigns such as the victory at Hisar and the victorious march into Samarqand.

It is often suggested that Bābur's decision to profess Shīʿī Islam in exchange for crucial Iranian aid was a major factor in his defeat by the Uzbeks in the spring of 1512, and perhaps this contributed to the loss. The news of Shāh Ismāʿīl's ferocious persecution and killing of Sunni Muslims as he extended his control over the Iranian plateau between 1501 and 1510 must have been generally known in Mawarannahr. More particularly, his murder of Sunni leaders in Harat who refused to accept Shiʿism in December 1510 or January 1511, had undoubtedly reached Samarqand by this time. The fact that the Iranian Shāh attacked the Naqshbandī sufi order with special ferocity must have intensified their revulsion for the intolerant Shīʿī monarch. Bābur's known discipleship for the dominant Naqshbandī *shaykh* of the late fifteenth century, Khwājah Ahrār, a reverence widely shared by other Tīmūrids, would have made his alliance with Shāh Isma'il seem especially improbable and offensive to the many Naqshbandīs in Samarqand and throughout Mawarannahr.[156] Given the likely revulsion of Sunni Muslims for Bābur's alliance it is quite likely that Bābur would have alienated notables, ʿulamā and the urban Muslim population at large.

Yet apart from Haydar Mīrzā's general comments no extant source is known that testifies to the depth and political significance of their reaction. The only other eyewitness who was in Mawarannahr during the Tīmūrid occupation was the Uzbek partisan, Rūzhbihān Khunjī. Khunjī, who was in Samarqand itself when Bābur arrived, speaks bitterly enough about the "heretics," and he claims that it was he who convinced Ubaydullah Khan, the Uzbek ruler of Bukhara, to undertake a campaign against Bābur.[157] However, even if Samarqand was, like Rūzbihān Khunjī himself, seething with discontent, the question remains how social unrest in the city might have contributed to Bābur's defeat near Bukhara nearly two hundred miles away. No one has ever shown there was a direct connection, and when Bābur returned defeated to the city in the summer it was not closed against him.

[156] Khwājah Ahrār's extensive *waqf* holdings in Samarqand is one measure of the Naqshbandi influence in the city. See O.D. Chekovich, *Samarkandskie Dokumenty* XV-XVI vv.

[157] Rūzbihān Khunjī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, 54-55.

Following their defeat in Hisar and later flight in the face of the estimated 60,000 Safavid-Tīmūrid army, Uzbek leaders had retreated into the Turkistan steppe as they had done so often in the past when confronted with large, well-equipped forces. However, in the spring the hydra-headed Uzbek coalition re-formed and marched on Tashkent and Bukhara. Bābur sent reinforcements to Tashkent and set out for Bukhara to confront what Haydar Mīrzā calls Ubaydullah Khan's *pūr-rīkhtih*, his "ragtag" force of approximately 3000 Uzbeks. He characterizes Bābur's army as 40,000 well-equipped troops.[158] In this instance especially Haydar Mīrzā's estimate is probably very inaccurate, for he had fallen ill and remained behind in Samarqand. He does not identify any of the troops involved. Haydar Mīrzā's figure is questionable for another reason; it is very difficult to believe Bābur could have assembled an army of this size if indeed he had dismissed his Iranian allies at Bukhara the previous autumn. Bābur had brought about five thousand of his own troops with him from Hisar, and some of these he had already sent to reinforce Tashkent. Others were in Bukhara with Sherīm Tagha'ī. Some Mongol troops may have joined Bābur in Hisar and later in Samarqand during the winter months, but probably not enough to constitute an army of even 10,000.[159]

Yet Haydar Mīrzā's tone of utter bewilderment that Bābur lost to Ubaydullah Khan at the battle at Köl-i mālik in May/June 1512 indicates that he at least believed the armies were mismatched, information he must have heard from Bābur himself, his foster-father Jan Beg Atekeh, or other eyewitnesses to the battle when they retreated back to Samarqand. His implication that Bābur at least commanded superior numbers at this battle is indirectly corroborated by an account of the battle by the Safavid historian Hasan-i Rūmlū, who attributes Uzbek success to the heroism of twenty men and a subsequent ruse of Ubaydullah Khan that lured Bābur's forces into a trap.[160] Haydar Mīrzā, writing more than

[158] TR-T. f. 126.

[159] Azimdzhanova has an extended discussion of Bābur's defeat at Bukhara, utilizing principally Rūzbihān Khunjī and Hāfiz Tanīsh, although as has been seen the latter took his information directly from Haydar Mīrzā See *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii*, 94-97.

[160] Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-tawārīkh*, 167-70. Yet, Khwāndamīr describes the Uzbek force as *bīkarān* or "immense." *Habīb al-siyar*, III, 525. Could he have been writing to please his new patron, Bābur?

thirty years after the battle, still had only one explanation for Bābur's defeat, God's arbitrary demonstration of his own omnipotence.[161] He doesn't mention other possible factors known from Bābur's memoirs, such as the unwieldy nature of Bābur's military coalitions and the decade of proven Uzbek military superiority over Tīmūrid and Chaghatay armies. In narrating his loss to Shībānī Khan at Sar-i Pul outside Samarqand in 1501, Bābur himself implicitly attributed his defeat to the cohesiveness and mobility of Uzbek cavalry. Unfortunately in the absence of Bābur's kind of frank, first-hand account of this particular military disaster at Köl-i mālik in 1512, any evaluation of the battle is sheer speculation.

Returning briefly to Samarqand, Bābur "was forced to abandon the throne."[162] Whether religious discontent in the city influenced his decision is impossible to say, but even with strong popular support he would still have been faced with the military reality that had caused him to flee the city eleven years earlier. He was outnumbered by Uzbek forces, who had once again demonstrated their superiority in battle. Bābur now turned back to Hisar with the recuperating Haydar Mīrzā in tow.[163] He asked again for Shāh Ismāʿīl's help, and according to Haydar Mīrzā the Safavid Shāh sent him the commander Mir Najm with an estimated 60,000 troops.[164] This figure is both improbably high as well as suspiciously identical to the number Haydar Mīrzā gives for the Bābur's coalition army that marched from Hisar to attack the Uzbeks a year earlier. And Haydar Mīrzā himself had left Bābur to join his uncle in Andijan before the new Iranian troops arrived, so he did not even see the troops much less have an opportunity to count them. Hasan-i Rūmlū offers a far more reasonable estimate of 10-12,000 horsemen.[165]

Nonetheless this combined force was at least large enough for Bābur and his Iranian allies to return west again in the early winter to besiege and occupy Qarshi, the fortress near Samarqand. After taking Qarshi they killed the Uzbek commander, Ubaydullah Khan's maternal uncle, and slaughtered the inhabitants. Haydar

[161] TR-T, f. 126.
[162] Ibid., f. 126.
[163] Ibid., f. 126.
[164] Ibid., f. 126a.
[165] Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-tawārīkh*, 170.

Mīrzā implies the Iranians carried out the massacre, and despite his Tīmūrid-Chaghatay bias he may be reporting accurately, for Hasan-i Rūmlū, like Khwāndamīr before him, describes the *qatl-i ʿām*, the general killing or massacre of fifteen thousand, entirely as Mīr Najm's doing.[166] Interestingly for a Safavid historian he even describes Mīr Najm's massacre of Sayyids and their families who had taken refuge in the Friday mosque in Qarshi.[167] Whatever the uncertainty about Bābur's role he had no reason to kill people who had earlier welcomed him and whom he still hoped to rule.

Bābur and Mir Najm now marched back northwest toward Bukhara to attack the nearby fortress of Ghizhduvan, then held by Jani Beg Sultān. The Uzbeks won a decisive victory, killing Mīr Najm and many if not most of his troops. Bābur's own role in the battle is not known, but he now fled back to Hisar with the remainder of his forces—and presumably his family as well. Rūzbihān Kunjī describes Bābur's humiliating defeat with considerable relish, which he memorialized in a commemorative ghazal. In two lines that express his deeply offended Sunni sensibilities Kunjī writes with visceral contempt:

آن لشکر پریشان باز از در سمرقند * سوی حصار رفتند
پوشیده زیر چادر
اقبال داشت بابر تا بود اهل سنت * چون یار رافضی شد
افتاد در تدابر
*

From Samarqand's gate that pathetic army again * fled to Hisar, hidden under a chadar, Bābur, fortunate to have been a Sunni * Now through calculation become a friend of heresy.[168]

[166] Khwāndamīr gives exactly the same number of dead, but expresses it as "soldiers and peasants' rather than "small and great, young and old." His account is very brief, without the vivid details of Hasan-i Rūmlū. *Habīb al-siyar*, III, 527.

[167] Ibid., 171-72. According to Hasan-i Rūmlū the Sayyids invoked their common ʿAlid heritage in their appeals for mercy, but to no avail.

[168] Rūzbihān Khunjī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, 60. John E. Woods describes Khunjī (Isfahānī)'s background, principally religious education and principles of historical writing in his revised edition of Khunjī's history of the reign of Sultān Yaʿqūb Aq Quyunlu in Azerbaijan. See Fadlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī Isfahānī, *Tār'ikh-i Ālam-Ārā-yi Amīnī* Persian Text edited by John E. Woods with the abridged English translation by Vladimir Minorsky, *Persia in A. D. 1478-1490*, 1-11.

Bābur arrived in Hisar only to experience a new rebellion of some Mongol *amirs*, including Mir Ayūb Begchik. Leaving some of his men in the citadel he then fled south across the Amu Darya to Qunduz, while the Mongols tore Hisar to pieces, plundering everything in sight. Uzbek chiefs reoccupied Hisar the next spring. Haydar Mīrzā later spoke with Mīr Ayūb Begchik who regretted his part in this rebellion and the ensuing sack of Hisar.[169] "I heard Mīr Ayūb Begchik say," writes Haydar Mīrzā, "'When I was subject to the Mongols' power and witnessed their dealings with the people, I frequently pleaded with God quickly to call down a calamity so that the Muslims would be released.'"[170] Bābur might have enjoyed hearing confirmed his own distaste for Mongol indiscipline and treachery, but he could not have taken any other consolation from this ignominious denouement to his Mawarannahr campaign. While he remained in northern Afghanistan for another two years, initially, says Haydar Mīrzā, "wandering around Qunduz," he never again crossed the Oxus in force, leaving Samarqand and Mawarannahr to the Uzbeks and the revanchist nostalgia of his descendants in Agra and Delhi.[171] By 1514 he returned to Kabul, and Nāsir Mīrzā, in what was an astonishing act of fraternal loyalty for these times, relinquished the city and returned to his appanage in frigid Ghazni.

[169] Haydar Mīrzā describes this important Mongol clan. TR-T, fs. 144a-b.

[170] TR-T, f. 127a.

[171] Ibid., f. 127. His great-grandson Jahāngīr (1605-1636) expressed just this ambition to reconquer Mawarannahr in his memoirs for 1607. "As I had made up my exalted mind to the conquest of Māwarā-n-nahr (Transoxiana), which was the hereditary kingdom of my ancestors, I desired...to go myself...to undertake the conquest of my ancestral dominions." Alexander Rogers trans. and Henry Beveridge ed., *The Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī or Memoirs of Jahāngīr* (Delhi: Munshiram, repr. 1978), I, 89. Jahāngīr never began this campaign. His successor, Shāh Jahān, made a more serious attempt when he dispatched his sons to Balkh between 1645 and 1648.

CHAPTER FIVE

POETRY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

هر وقت که کورکا سین مینینك سوزومنی
سوزومنی اوتوب ساغینغاسین اوزومنی
*

Each time you read my words,
Reading them, think of me.

Bābur in the *Rampur Dīwān,*
Agra, 28 December 1528

When Bābur visited his Tīmūrid cousins in Harat in December 1506, he stayed for nearly three weeks in the former house of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī (b. 1441-d.1501), the outstanding Turkī poet of the Tīmūrid century and the writer most responsible for gaining recognition of Turkī as a literary language. Surprisingly Bābur says nothing in his memoirs about what his residence in Navāʾī's house meant to him. His silence is so surprising because he revered Navāʾī as a writer and after politics few things seem to have mattered to him as much as his ambition to become a recognized Turkī poet. In 1500, just a year before the great man's death, Bābur had sent Navāʾī a Turkī couplet written on the back of a letter, probably the act of an aspiring poet hoping to gain recognition from the man who had long been the demanding arbiter of literary reputations in Harat, the literary and artistic capital of the late-Tīmūrid world. Bābur fills his memoirs with allusions to his study and composition of poetry, and quotes many of his own verses in the text. He describes how he distributed copies of his verse to his sons and compatriots, presumably seeking literary immortality. The seriousness of his commitment can be measured by his own essay on Turkī prosody, which, he implies, was far superior to Navāʾī's own discussion of Turkī meters.

During his lifetime Bābur never achieved the literary fame he sought, partly perhaps because he died in India, far from the literate, Turkī-speaking populations in Harat and Samarqand. His

poems never seem to have become popular in his homeland. Nor does he claim for himself what he says of one of his young Tīmūrid contemporaries, Baysunghur Mīrzā, that his poems were so popular they were known throughout Samarqand![1] Had Bābur's verse been so widely read he would not have been shy about saying so. The fact that few copies of his verse have been preserved is probably a reasonable gauge of his lack of public acclaim. Even five hundred years later when Bābur's fame as a writer of "classic" Turkī is second only to Navāʾī's renown, most critics would find his verse quite ordinary when measured against the refined but rigid literary standards of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Yet while his poems cannot be said to represent great Turkī verse when measured against classical Perso-Islamic norms, they comprise an outstanding autobiographical source, for many reflect his tumultuous life in immediate and discernible ways. Some verses are conventional, stylized and stereotypical, but others can be characterized as existential, where the force of his personality and the trauma of his circumstances break through the literary etiquette of the time to reveal a distinct individual.

Often this individuality is immediately obvious from the poem itself, especially in the many cases where he gives his own name as the *takhallus*, the author's signature near the conclusion of a poem. Most pre-modern poets used pseudonyms or pen names for the *takhallus*, but Bābur gives his own. Bābur has also provided an autobiographical context for the verse. He not only quotes and dates many of his poems he includes in the text, but occasionally explains what he was thinking when he wrote them. It is also true that in Bābur's *dīwāns* or collections of poetry, his verses are organized chronologically rather than in alphabetical order according to types of rhyme schemes, as is the case with most classical Persian poets.[2] In poems written in India and collected in December 1528 his personality is dramatically and poignantly manifest even without the prose text. This is a remarkable circumstance for any premodern Muslim poet, most of whose lives are so poorly known the relationship between their life and art will always

[1] BN-M, f. 68b.

[2] Jan Rypka, "History of Persian Literature," Up to the beginning of the Twentieth Century," in Jan Rypka ed., *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel, 1968), 96 and S. Azimdzhanova, *Indiĭskiĭ Divan Babura*, 33-34.

remain tantalizingly ambiguous. Bābur's verse refutes the idea that "abstract thinking and a generalized matter of vision and of expression brought about a complete severance of medieval Near Eastern poetry from life, from reality,"[3] although like most truisms there are many other exceptions.[4] His poems also offer the rare opportunity for this era, to study the literary evolution of a pre-modern Muslim poet and to feel the artistic tension between the personal and the poetical, between life and art.

The Literary Milieu

In fifteenth-century Mawarannahr Bābur's interest in poetry was hardly unique. Many of his Tīmūrid and Chaghatay predecessors and contemporaries ruling in Khurasan and Mawarannahr wrote verse.[5] In fact he was surrounded by poets. On the basis merely of his own many character sketches of Turco-Mongol aristocrats it is obvious that poetry was the cultural skill that these men valued the most highly, and the one they found most accessible. Their regard for poetry characterized the aristocratic and literate classes throughout the Islamic world, including contemporary Ottomans, whose literary language most closely resembled Turkī. What has been said of Ottomans applies with equal force to Bābur's compatriots as well.

> For them there was no major medium of cultural expression other than literature and by and large the art of literature to them meant the art of poetry. It is all but impossible to convey to present-day audiences in the West how wide-spread, how important, how meaningful poetry, especially lyric poetry, was to Ottoman culture.... Poets and would-be poets abounded at all levels of society. From love to the most profound search for spiritual truth or to impassioned pleas for employment or largesse, all manner of things that touched people

[3] Elizbar Javelidze, "On the Typology and Method of Research into Medieval Turkish Poetry," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 7 (1983), 268. The author uses the term "medieval" to refer to a literary *longue durée*, one that includes the period after the 15th century, during which the "canonical and conventional character" of Turkish literature took shape.

[4] As one exception see Sunil Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier, Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān of Lahore* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000).

[5] Annemarie Schimmel, "Bābur Padishah, The Poet, with an Account of the Poetical Talent in His Family," *Islamic Culture* 34, 2 (April, 1960), 125-38.

> deeply were expressed in poetry. People also played with poetry, did tricks with poetry, showed off their talents with poetry, were funny, insulting and naughty in poems.... everyone from ruler to the peasant, from religious scholar to the rake and drunkard, aspired to be a poet.[6]

Some also wrote poems for didactic purposes, because verse could convey complex information in a memorable, that is in a rhymed and cadenced way. Babur chose the poetic form for two of his long religious poems, the *Mubaiyin* and his rendition of Khwājah Ahrar's *Risāla-i Vālidiyā*. In both cases he used poetry not for literary effect, but because he thought that his ideas would be easy to recall in verse.

Bābur himself, as well as many of his fellow Tīmūrids and companions, also cultivated the other arts that were linked with verse—music, calligraphy and painting, for as has been written about Persian poetry also applies to Turkī—and Ottoman Turkish. "It provides the subject matter for the calligrapher, themes to illustrate for the painter, texts to chant and rhythmic patterns for the musicians to build on."[7] Even if they didn't write themselves, most Turco-Mongol aristocrats patronized poets—and often musicians, calligraphers and painters—to the degree that modern scholars often characterize the century after Timur's death as the Tīmūrid renaissance.[8] Bābur's cousin Baysunghur Mīrzā was a typical example of the literate and artistically accomplished Tīmūrids of the late fifteenth-century, a calligrapher, painter and poet. As Bābur admiringly describes him he was:

> a just, good natured and learned prince.... He was generous in moderation. He wrote the taʿlīq script very well. He was also not a bad painter and recited his [own] poetry. His pen name was ʿĀdilī, but he did not compose enough poetry to make a *dīwān*...[9]

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[6] Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black and Mehmet Kalpaklı ed. and trans, *Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1997), 4.

[7] Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat, *The Art of Persian Music* (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1991), 153. See also Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 241-42 and Annemarie Schimmel, "Hafiz and His Contemporaries," in CHI, 6, 940-41. For an introduction to classical Persian and Turkī verse, including poems rendered in song, see among other recordings Jean During ed., *Tadjikistan, Chants de bardes*, Songs of the Bardes (Geneva: Archives Internationales De Musique Populaire, 1998).

[8] Jean-Paul Roux, *Historie Des Grands Moghols, BABUR*, Chap. 2, "La Renaissance timouride."

[9] BN-M, f. 68b. *ʿādilī* from the Arabic verb, *ʿadala*, to act justly or equitably.

Baysunghur Mīrzā's verse "was so popular in Samarqand that there were few houses in which you would not find some of his poems!" Whether it was Persian or not Bābur doesn't say.

As has been seen, Bābur grew up hearing poetry recited at his father's modest court in Akhsi. However, all of the writers whose works Bābur remembers hearing in those days were Persian-language poets. This reflected the continued dominance of Persian as the literary lingua franca of Mawarannahr, even in eastern Ferghanah, where the majority of the population undoubtedly spoke Turkī, as Bābur says they did in Andijan.[10] The dominance of literary Persian in Bābur's day is statistically confirmed for Khurasan at least by Navāʾī in his 1491-92 survey of 336 poets who lived in the region in his youth in the mid-fifteenth century and later. Ninety percent of these men wrote in Persian, and most of those who did write in Turkī, including Navāʾī himself, wrote in both languages.[11] Most of these writers imitated or played off on the Persian-language poets whom Bābur remembers hearing in Akhsi: Firdausī, Nizāmī, Rūmī, Saʿdī, Amīr Khusrau and Hāfiz. Yet these writers did far more than just imitate Persian literary models. They were so conscious of their Persian literary past that "Tīmūrid-Turkmen literati were the first to define what constituted 'classical' poetry, its themes and archetypes."[12] Jāmī, the great Persian poet of Husayn Bayqara's Harat, was himself instrumental in this process of classification and codification of Persian writers.[13]

These writers' concern for the classical tradition and their codification of these works produced a literature characterized by formalism and tightly regulated organization.[14] It may have directly contributed to one of the signal characteristics of the Persian verse

[10] In the year 2000 this continued to be true. While Tajiks comprise about 35% of the population of Samarqand and Persian is widely spoken there, in Andijan there are relatively few Tajiks and Persian is rarely heard and poorly understood. Nonetheless, the prestige of classical Persian-language poets—Saʿdī, Amīr Khusrau, Rūmī, Hafiz, Jāmī and others remains very great. See also Evgeniī Èduardovich Bertel's, "Literatura Na Persidskom Yazike B Sredneī Azii," in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1988), 261-302.

[11] Evgeniī Èduarovich Bertel's, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami* ed. by E. R. Rustamov (Moskva: "Nauka," 1965), 27.

[12] Paul Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī, Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, 154.

[13] Ibid. 154, citing Inʿamul Haqq Kausar, *Fughani's [sic] Life and Works* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1963), 107.

[14] Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 164.

produced in Mawarannahr and Khurasan during the second half of the Tīmūrid era, its increasing obscurity, a product of the "growth of technique at the expense of contents."[15] Navā'ī himself criticized the trend toward excessive adornment in this verse by remarking that poems contained too much "Tatar musk," remarking "that adornment, as with musk, is good in reasonable limits. However, when all the air consists of musk then a person only suffocates...."[16] Navā'ī, though, contributed to the obscurantism he criticized by indulging his own taste for trick poems, particularly the *mu'ammā* or enigma. The Tīmūrid penchant for riddles, which Bābur also wrote, was especially the result of his influence.[17] This form was also popularized, not surprisingly given his taste for convoluted prose, by the historian Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, the author of the *Ẓafar nāmah*, whose prose was admired and copied by Bābur's cousin Haydar Mīrzā.[18]

Turkī verse had been written well before Navā'ī began his literary career. It was especially in the kingdom of Khwarazm, relatively isolated from the major urban centers of Persianate culture, that Turkī received its first major impetus in the fourteenth century.[19] In Khwarazm also Turkī verse was legitimized by adopting Persian metrics and absorbing Persian and Arabic vocabulary. During the fifteenth century the use of Turkī as a literary language was substantially increased by Tīmūrid patronage and the example of at least eight Tīmūrid *mīrzā*s who wrote verse in their native language.[20] The first important Turkī poet whose work has survived is known only by his *takhallus* or literary pseudonym, Sakākkī, a court poet of both Khalīl-Sultān, a grandson of Tīmūr who ruled

[15] Bertels, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami*, 45.
[16] Ibid., 36.
[17] Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 156.
[18] Bertels, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami*, 42. See also Losensky, *Welcoming Fighanī*, 154-58.
[19] The very earliest extended examples of Turkī verse are the two twelfth-century Turkī works the *Qutadgu Bilig*, written in 1069 in Kāshgar, and the *Dīwān lugat al-Turk* written in the 1070's by a native of the Lake Issiq-Köl region, just north of Ferghanah. The poetics of the latter work are discussed by I. V. Stebleva, *Razvitie Tyurskikh Poeticheskikh Form v XI Beke* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1971). Apart from these works, for an early Turkī quatrain known in India see the undated example cited by the late Ghaznavid/Ghurid-era writer Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārakshāh Marwār-rūdī in his 1206 a. d. work completed in Lahore, *Ta'rikh-i Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārakshāh* , 46.
[20] Bertels, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami*, 46.

briefly in Samarqand after Timur's death in 1404, as well as his successor in Samarqand, Ulugh Beg. A disciple of the Naqshbandī sufi order, to which so many Tīmūrid mīrzās were themselves devoted, Sakākkī wrote *qasīdah*s eulogizing both his Tīmūrid patrons and Naqshbandī pīrs, and lyrical *ghazals* modeled on the poems of Hāfiz.[21] In his survey of Tīmūrid poets Navā'ī remarks that while Sakākkī was not alive in 1491-92, his poems were still highly valued in Samarqand, where Bābur might have heard or read them in 1498, 1500 or 1511.

Navā'ī also remarked in his typically condescending way that he himself thought Sakākkī's poems undistinguished, although it is impossible to say whether this was primarily a literary judgement or a reflection of the intense competition for cultural predominance between Harat and Samarqand.[22] Navā'ī was far more generous with the Harat poet Lutfī, a contemporary of his who lived in the suburbs of the city in the second half of the fifteenth century. A poet in both Persian and Turkī, Lutfī began the process that Navā'ī completed. As Navā'ī himself recognized, Lutfī more than anyone else before him raised Turkī to a new literary status by writing beautiful poems in that language.[23] Unlike the highly placed Navā'ī, a boon companion of Sultān Husayn Bayqara, Lutfī led a quiet, "saintly" life of a man imbued with sūfī ideals, although he could be egotistical and aggressive in his poetry. He sometimes challenged the primacy of certain Persian poets, although not explicitly because they wrote in Persian. While famous during his life for his own Persian verse, he was also widely known for his Turkī poems, and only these have survived in several manuscripts, one measure of their popularity. He wrote lyrical verse, that is *ghazals*, almost exclusively, depicting love in all of its manifestations.[24] His model was Hāfiz, the model for nearly all Persian and Turkī lyric poets of the time. Lutfī intentionally sought to reproduce in Turkī Hāfiz's "simplicity and naturalness."[25] He also excelled in composing the uniquely Turkī verse form known as the *tuyuq*, a *rubā'ī*-like poem derived from Turkic folklore. However, unlike the *rubā'ī* the *tuyuq* could be written in different meters and, more importantly, the

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[21] Ibid., 47-48.
[22] Bertels briefly describes this competition. Ibid., 49.
[23] Ibid., 58.
[24] Ibid., 56.
[25] Ibid., 53.

form was distinguished by its use of homonyms, words with identical pronunciation having different meanings. Often this effect was achieved by mixing Persian and Turkī words, as in the case of the word *bār* meaning "is" or "have" in Turkī, and "time" or "load," among many variant meanings in Persian.

It is impossible to say how much Bābur knew of the work of Lutfī or earlier Turkī poets, but such writers were part of a growing Turkī literary tradition that in his eyes as well as in the view of modern critics, found its finest practitioner in Navāʾī. Thus Bābur, who rarely praises other poets unreservedly, writes of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī that "ʿAlī Shīr Beg had no equal. Since poetry has been written in the Turkī tongue there was no one so prolific or so good."[26] He goes on to describe and critique Navāʾī's voluminous output and to praise his renowned artistic patronage and charitable activities. However, it was Navāʾī's poetry that meant the most to him, and he mentions that in December 1519 he completed copying a selection he had made of his *ghazallar and abyat* [*lar*] or "odes and couplets."[27] Yet, while also extolling Mīr ʿAlī Shīr as an extraordinary patron Bābur cannot help but remark that his Persian poetry was insipid and his treatise on prosody, the *Mīzān al-Auzān*, the "Measure of Measures," was intellectually worthless.[28] Here is another case of Bābur "telling the truth," and in this case probably acting more responsibly as a literary critic than many professional literary historians of the time, who do not always offer such balanced appraisals of famous men.

Apart from his knowledge of Navāʾī's voluminous output, Bābur may also have been encouraged to write by the example of Sultān Husayn Bayqara, Navāʾī's longtime companion, supporter and champion of the use of Turkī in Harat. As has been seen, Bābur repeatedly measures himself against Tīmūrids or other Muslim rulers, and more than anyone else Sultān Husayn Bayqara repre-

[26] BN-M, f. 170b. For a Soviet-era Uzbek appreciation of Navāʾī that stresses the poet's social awareness see A. Kh. Khaītmetov and Z. S. Kedrina, *Istoriya Uzbekskoī Literatury* (Tashkent: "Fan", 1987), I. The standard, contemporary Persian-language account is by the Harat historian Khwāndamīr who had been patronized by the poet. See T. Gandjeï ed., *The Makārim al-Akhlāq*, A Treatise on ʿAlīshīr Navāʾī by Ghiyāth ad-Dīn b. Humām ad-Dīn Muhammad "Khvāndamīr (Cambridge: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1979).

[27] BN-M, f. 248b.

[28] BN-M, f. 171a. The term Bābur uses for Mīr ʿAlī's prosody is *madkhūl.*

sented his standard of a great Tīmūrid monarch. Bābur may not have begun writing poetry because of the great man's example—like most Tīmūrids he had matured in an environment where ambitious Turco-Mongol aristocrats were expected to be able to compose verse. Nonetheless, just as he explicitly and favorably compares his military achievements to those of his relative, Bābur implicitly flatters his own literary talents when he damns Husayn Bayqara with faint praise by saying "He had a poetic temperament. He compiled a *dīwān*. He wrote in Turkī....Some of his verses are not bad, but the Mīrzā's *dīwān* is all in the same meter."[29] As one who wrote a treatise on prosody and is careful to identify the meters used by other poets he discusses, Bābur is suggesting that one who wrote in only one meter cannot really be thought to be an outstanding poet.[30]

The Poetic Art

Bābur is known to have written nearly six hundred poems. Some of these are appear in his memoirs, most do not. Nearly all are in Turkī, only a few are in Persian and one at least is in Urdu, the north Indian patois, mixing Hindi grammar and largely Persian vocabulary. More than four hundred of these verses are *ghazal*s or lyrics and *rubā*ʿ*iyāt*, quatrains of the type made famous by Edward Fitzgerald's rendering of ʿUmar Khayyam's *Rubā*ʿ*iyāt*.[31] The remainder are principally of three types: *qita*ʿ*h* or "fragments," *tuyuq*, quatrains with homonyms and *mu*ʿ*ammā*, enigmas or puzzles and a

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[29] BN-M, f. 164b.

[30] Two Turkic-speaking rulers of Iran whose poetry have been preserved are described by Vladimir Minorsky. See his articles "Jihān-Shāh Qara-Qoyunlu and His Poetry, " and "The Poetry of Shāh Ismāʿīl I" in *Medieval Iran and its Neighbours*, 271-97 and 1006a-1053a. Both wrote in what Minorsky identifies as a "Southern Turkish" dialect directly associated with the so-called "Azerbaijani Turkish." Shāh Ismāʿīl I, the founder in 1501 of the Safavid dynasty, wrote poetry that was distinctly influenced by Turkī, that is Chaghatay. See also the Turkī verse of Akbar's tutor, Bayram Khan. S. Hussamuddin Rashdi and Muhammad Sabir, *Diwan of Bayram Khan* Introduction by Mahmudul Hasan Siddiqi (Karachi: Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, 1971).

[31] For an analysis of the development of this verse form see A. K. Kozmoyan, *Rubai v Klassicheskoī Poezzii na Farsi* (X-XII vv) (Erevan, Armenia: Izdaelʿstvo AN Armyanskoī SSR, 1981).

number of unfinished verses of various kinds. He also wrote one *masnavī*, a longer poem of rhyming couplets usually used for narratives or histories. Bābur is one of the few poets of the Tīmūrid era to have written almost exclusively in Turkī. It seems clear that he felt most comfortable in his native tongue, perhaps because of his upbringing in remote Andijan, where Persian was less commonly spoken than in Samarqand, Bukhara and especially Harat.

Nonetheless, he apparently began his literary career by writing in Persian, as would have been very natural for a young man who had repeatedly heard Persian verse while growing up. As Navāʾī writes in his Turkī essay, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain* (The Judgment of Two Languages) when arguing for Turkī as a literary language, Persian provided the imagery and poetic vocabulary which Turkī writers had just begun to develop and popularize. He could have been alluding to Bābur when he says that "Ignorant and affected youths have tried to compose facile poems with Persian words."[32] Even the *beg*s of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, Navāʾī laments, "have clung to Persian," because "it is most difficult to combine properly its [the Turkī language's] wider range of expressions, its uniqueness of meanings and its clarity of style."[33] It was not merely that Persian offered poets a canonical system of prosody and a wealth of vocabulary, metaphors and stock images. The language retained its enormous prestige as a cultural vehicle for both pithy and profound thoughts. Thus even while Bābur wrote his memoirs and most of his verse in Turkī in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*, he still quotes from Saʿdī, Hāfiz and the other classical Persian-language poets when he needs an irrefutable aphorism. He never once quotes Navāʾī!

Bābur first mentions writing poetry when he describes his infatuation for the boy Bāburī in the Andijan bazar in the spring of 1500. He remarks that at this time he was composing one and two-line Persian verses and then quotes one of them.

هیچکس چون من خراب و عاشق و رسوا مباد

هیچ محبوبی جو تو بیرحم و بی پروا مباد

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[32] Navāʾī, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain*, 24. See also Bertel's, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami*, 44.

[33] Navāʾī, *Muhākamat al-Lughatain*, 44-5.

May no person be as ravaged, lovesick and humiliated as I.
May no beloved be as pitiless and unconcerned, as thou.[34]

If this poem had been found in *dīwān* of most poets, it would be taken as nothing more than a mediocre bit of Persian verse that repeated the stylized literary sentiment found in thousands of Persian poems, one which had no discernible—or likely—relation to the poet's life. If it was only known from such a collection it would probably also be impossible to date, as it would usually be placed in the *dīwān* according to the last letter of the rhyme and then by the first letter of each poem. That is Perso-Islamic and Turkī verses were normally organized according to poetic criteria rather than chronological and autobiographical ones. Yet, in Bābur's case readers can identify this couplet for what it is, a juvenile production of an inexperienced poet, one who is expressing his actual feelings by using generic Persian poetic vocabulary depicting distant, unresolved infatuations.

Unresolved infatuations are the real or ostensible subject of the majority of Bābur's *ghazal*s and *rubā*ʿ*iyāt*, and it is impossible to interpret his poems without understanding the literary conventions of these verse forms. The *ghazal* was the most widely practiced genre among Muslim poets who wrote in Persian, Ottoman Turkish or Turkī during Bābur's lifetime. He himself wrote at least 119 *ghazal*s of varying length. In Iran, the Ottoman Empire and Mawarannahr the mastery of the *ghazal* was usually equated with the poetic art in this period. Poets, who were usually but not exclusively men, were often evaluated solely by the quality of their *ghazal*s.[35] A poem of four to fourteen distichs or couplets, written in a variety of meters with a rhyme scheme of aa, ba, ca etc., the *ghazal* is in outward form at least, a love plaint, "addressed to the absent or indifferent beloved."[36] The form represented an Islamic variant of the literary phenomenon of aristocratic or courtly love. Most *ghazal*s revel in the pathos of unrequited or interrupted love in a decorous, highly stylized idiom recounting: the poet's infatuation

[34] BN-M, f. 75b.

[35] Kemal Silay, *Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 52.

[36] Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 255. See especially her Chapter 6, "Ghazal: The Ideals of Love."

and sometimes his brief meeting with his beloved, who more often than not displays cruel indifference, his agonized separation from the object of his desire, and his inevitable, fatalistic resignation. Most writers of *ghazal*s, and sometimes *rubā῾iyāt*, also include a *takhallus*, their pen name, in the *maqta῾*, the poem's final couplet.[37]

Bābur often used *rubā῾iyāt* to express the same sentiments as the *ghazal.* A quatrain or four-line poem written in one meter with the rhyme scheme aaba, the *rubā῾ī* is regarded as a quintessentially Iranian verse form, although it may have had a Turkic-Central Asian origin, like its close cousin the *tuyuq*, the quatrain of homonyms.[38] Whether it originated in Central Asia—or even in China—it gained its enormous popularity in northeastern Iran by the time ῾Umar Khayyām was born there, in Nishapur, in the mid-eleventh century. An epigrammatic form resembling the Japanese fourteen syllable haiku poem in form if not usually in content, the *rubā῾ī* allowed writers to express a single feeling or idea in a pithy way, sometimes rendering an idea almost as a proverb. By the thirteenth century it had become one of the most popular verse forms in Iran.[39] Bābur often wrote *rubā῾iyāt* to express stylized love themes, but as will be seen he, like his Iranian predecessors, exploited the form to express a wide variety of personal sentiments as well.[40] He wrote slightly more than 200 *rubā῾iyāt*, more than any other verse form, perhaps because the succinct quatrain was an ideal form for a harried Tīmūrid who rarely enjoyed the sustained leisure to write many longer verses. Bābur's grandson, Akbar, epigrammatically recognized the relatively lighter quality of the *rubā῾ī* compared to the *ghazal* when he observed: "One should write out a *rubā῾ī* of ῾Umar Khayyām, after reading a *ghazal* of Hāfiz, otherwise the latter is like drinking wine without a relish."[41]

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[37] Wheeler M. Thackston offers an excellent, concise introduction to the literary and technical characteristics of Persian verse in his book, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Bethesda, Md.: Iranbooks, 1994), ix-xxvi.

[38] Peter Avery trans and ed. and John Heath-Stubbs trans., *The Rubā'iyat of Omar Khayyam* (London and N.Y.: Penguin Books, repr. 1981), 11-12. Avery himself does not suggest a connection between the *rubā῾ī* and the *tuyuq*.

[39] Ibid., 11.

[40] See for example Sharma's discussion of the similar "personal" use of the *rubā῾ī* by the Ghaznavid poet Salmān, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier*, 80 & n. 22.

[41] AA, 111, 441. The English translation uses quatrain and ode respectively for *rubā῾ī* and *ghazal.*

It is still debated whether or not *ghazal*s and *rubāʿiyāt* were originally addressed to men or women, a nearly unresolvable problem as Persian and Turkī pronouns do not express gender. However, in Persian literature at least, "Long narrative poems... that deal with erotic subjects... tell almost exclusively heterosexual stories [while].... short and medium length poems are on the other hand often overtly, or at least implicitly, homosexual...."[42] Bābur in discussing the *ghazals* of the Harat poet with the pen-name *Hilālī*, remarks that this man had also written a offensive *masnavī* called the "Shāh and the Dervish," in which the dervish or sūfī is the lover and the beloved, the king, is "like a courtesan and a whore."[43] In criticizing this poem further Bābur implies that Hilālī broke with the tradition of earlier poets who composed *masnavīs* that portrayed the lover as a man and the beloved as a woman.[44] Whether Bābur means to imply that this was also true of *ghazal*s is not clear, although in one of his own *ghazal*s Bābur compares his beloved to Laylā, the beautiful maiden of Amīr Khusrau or Jāmī's poem, while he depicts himself as Laylā's male lover Majnūn.[45] It is now generally accepted that by the fifteenth century poets addressed their poems to men as often as not. Haydar Mīrzā quotes several occasional *rubāʿiyāt*s and fragments his uncle, Saʿīd Khan, addressed to a young Begchik, Beg Muhammad, during his stay with Bābur in Kabul, in which he used the standard romantic imagery—cyprus-like, rosy-cheeked, peri (fairy)-like.[46]

Yet, it is almost certainly a mistake to assume anything from a poem about an author's heterosexual or homoerotic orientation. In part this is because poetry that on the surface seems to be addressed to a beloved, might just be using romantic imagery to greet a friend or relative. Like other poets Bābur does not usually make clear the sex of the beloved, although he himself repeatedly expresses his intense distaste for the Turco-Mongol aristocrats who he knew procured young boys for sexual pleasure. However, his contempt for that practice did not mean that he turned away from

[42] Dick Davis, *Borrowed Ware Medieval Persian Epigrams* (Washington D.C.: Mage, 1997), 21-22, where Davis further remarks, that "Many poets seem to celebrate liaisons with both sexes with equal enthusiasm...."
[43] BN-M, f. 181b.
[44] Ibid., f. 181b.
[45] Stebleva, no. 31, p. 239 and Yücel, no. 34, p. 138.
[46] TR-T, fs. 111a-b.

the pleasure of male friendship, ties so fundamental in his male-dominated and highly segregated social world. He may have seen his self-described infatuation with the boy Bāburī in this light, and later he does address a *ghazal* to his Tīmūrid cousin, Ways Mīrzā or Mīrzā Khan, that seems to express similar emotions.[47] Or perhaps in the case of Bāburī it was a case of life imitating art, something not unheard of among impressionable young men.

The ambiguity as to the actual or intended identity of the beloved—or even the lover—is inherent in many aristocratic literary traditions depicting courtly love, including the *ghazal*. Simply put such poetry was not usually autobiographical. What has been written about sexual references in Japanese court poetry in the Heian period probably also applies to the *ghazal*.

> As courtly love became increasingly codified, it grew fixed in forms that did not always reflect current relations between the sexes. It became, in short, a fiction like our [European] courtly love.... In composing love poems for such a conventional code, men might write poems whose speakers were women, and women poems whose speakers were men.[48]

The obvious difference between these two traditions is the prevalence of women authors in Heian Japan. The number of female poets who are known to have written such lyrics in Persian is quite small, although three Tīmūrid-Mughul princesses are known to have done so.[49]

Complicating this picture was the use of the *ghazal* by Iranian poets to include mystical religious and even panegyric expression. This development reached its apogee in the *ghazal*s of the great fourteenth-century Iranian, Persian-language poet, Hāfiz.[50] In his hands and many others the passion of lovers becomes the yearning of sūfīs for the mystical union with god and especially with Hāfiz, love or praise in the *qasīdah* tradition for the patron. Given the allegorical nature of much Persian verse and the widespread use of sūfī imagery, a particular poem might seem to evoke profane love

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[47] Stebleva, no. 102, p. 310 and Yücel no. 105, pp. 179-80.

[48] Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 431.

[49] Ahmad Gulchīn-i Maʿānī, *Karvān-i Hind* (Tehran: Intishārat-i Āstān-i Quds-i Razavī, 1369/1990), 411. Dick Davis also gives an example of one, Jahān Khatun. See Davis' work, *Borrowed Ware, Medieval Persian Epigrams*, 189.

[50] Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 278-98.

or elaborations of earthly delights, while the lover might actually be a sufi and the beloved, with his/her long, disheveled tresses, god. Wine consumed by this spiritual lover connoted spiritual intoxication. Utilizing these metaphors a court poet might also write a paean to his patron, who then assumed the role of beloved, with the powers to grant or withhold favors from the author.

As authors of Persian, Ottoman and Turkī *ghazal*s often employed the same imagery, whatever their own profession or religious inclination, it is usually difficult or simply impossible to distill purely personal, religious or political sentiments from the metaphors of a particular poem. Bābur himself was a disciple of the Naqshbandī sūfī order, but was not noticeably a pious or abstinent sūfī in his everyday life. He may have intended some of the verses he wrote in India to convey feelings of sūfī devotionalism, especially those he wrote in 1528 and 1529 when he repeatedly fell sick and began to sense his mortality, but the spirit of most his earlier *ghazals* and *rubā ͑iyāt* also seems closer to that of the *rind*.[51] A poet, lover and drinker, the *rind* was one almost ritually devoted to transitory pleasures. Similar in certain compelling respects to the Heian Japanese ideals of *irogonomi* and *suki*, the *rind* was frequently depicted in verses that echoed the skeptical, resigned quality of Khayyām's famous *rubā ͑iyāt*.[52] One such verse exploits the common use of moon as a metaphor for the beloved, and then plays off on that word twice more.

Since no one can Tomorrow guarantee.
Enjoy the moment, let your heart be free.
Ah, drink my moon, in moonlight, for the moon
Will make its rounds but won't find you and me.[53]

This is not to suggest that Bābur modeled his behavior on the *rind*, only that the *rind* is the reminiscent of Islamized but otherwise hard-drinking, socially uninhibited Chingīzid and Tīmūrid aristocrats—and often of the ruling class in Iran as well.

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[51] Michael C. Hillman, "Afterward," in *Hafez, Dance of Life*, ed. by M. and N. Batmangli (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1988), 97.

[52] Rajyashree Pandey, "Love, Poetry and Renunciation: Changing Configurations of the Ideal of Suki," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd Ser., 5.2 (July 1995), 226-27.

[53] Ahmad Saidi ed. and trans., *Rubai'yat of Omar Khayyam* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 66. Saidi is one of the few modern translators to maintain the *rubā ͑ī*'s rhyme scheme.

To read Bābur's *ghazal*s and *rubāʿiyāt* it is important to understand that poets composed these poems after mastering the metrical and metaphorical language of their predecessors. For Bābur and other writers in the Perso-Islamic cultural sphere of the eastern Islamic world, the most important literary models were, apart from Hāfiz (1326-80): Nizāmī (1140-c.1202), Saʿdī (1184-c.1292), Rūmī (1207-40), the Indo-Persian poet Amīr Khusrau (1253-1325) and Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's friend, the poet and Naqshbandī sufi, Jāmī (1414-92). After studying and memorizing thousands of these writers' verses poets employed stereotypical imagery to depict idealized infatuations and generic disappointments. They exhibited creativity by devising new variants on traditional models and themes. Despite the evocative beauty and resonant emotional language of many *ghazals*, their authors, especially professional court poets, did not normally write such verse to draw attention to a subjective experience fixed in an emotional moment. Instead, poets usually depicted literary emotions and situations quite unrelated to the experiential world. Perhaps it is fitting that as this verse became more formulaic and abstracted the beloved became more ambiguous and probably irrelevant, often a man and sometimes still a woman.[54] Referring to this abstracted quality of the Turkic verse derived from classical Persian models, the Georgian Turcologist Elizbar Javelidze has categorically stated that:

> Near Eastern mediaeval literature gives no example of a concrete man with his individual psyche and his unique psychological level; it does not render his personal feelings, his joys and sorrows. It makes an abstraction of the individual.[55]

Even if this assessment is too extreme, most modern literary scholars share Javelidze's general outlook. Many also argue that the device of the *takhallus,* the seemingly autobiographical reference in the final couplet, ought to be interpreted as a literary device rather than as a personal allusion, although there is substantial evidence of the *takhallus* being used in self-referential ways.[56]

Such poems find one of their most compelling analogies in the

[54] Meisami, *Persian Court Poetry*, 245-6.

[55] Javelidze, "On the Typology and Method of Research into Medieval Turkish Poetry," 268.

[56] See Sharma's discussion of Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān's use of this device. *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier*, 102-06.

literary precursors and characteristics of Shakespeare's sonnets—even to the homoerotic or androgynous qualities of many of his first 126 poems. The sonnets have repeatedly taxed the ingenuity of scholars, who have in turn strained the credulity of readers in searching for autobiographical clues to a poorly documented life amid the memorable language of the poems. In a similar way many students of Hāfiz have exerted exceptional but largely unproductive efforts to detect personal references in his *ghazal*s. A recent critic's remarks about the sonnets as sources for Shakespeare's life would be accepted by most scholars as equally applicable to the lyric poems of Hāfiz or to those of most classical Persian, Ottoman and Turkī poets.

> Biographical reading, as we understand it now, has so little purchase on these poems that criticism directed along such lines soon finds itself spinning off the text into vacuous literary chit-chat.[57]

The analogy is neither casual nor the similarity accidental, for as the *ghazal* is commonly thought to be rooted in the *nasīb,* the opening couplet of the *qasīdah,* "for most renaissance writers poetry was rooted in panegyric."[58] Even more particularly the authors of Elizabethan sonnets often explicitly derived their poems from the example of Petrarch's, *Rime Sparse.* Petrarch's fourteenth-century sequence, focused on the mystical Laura, had much the same defining influence on sixteenth century English sonneteers as did Hāfiz's *ghazals* on the Persian and Turkic lyric poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Just as it is more reasonable to interpret Petrarch's Laura and Shakespeare's "dark lady" as literary rather than autobiographical personalities, the same is true of the beloved in the *ghazals* of Hāfiz. Many of Bābur's lyric poems may also be fairly interpreted as literary exercises. Unlike Shakespeare and Hāfiz, though, Bābur was not a professional writer nor was his life undocumented. Not only does he discuss his own poetry and locate some verses in his prose narrative, but he always uses his own name, not a pen name, in the *takhallus.*[59]

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[57] John Kerrigan ed., *William Shakespeare: The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* (Penguin: London, 1986), 11.

[58] Ibid., 18 and Thomas P. Roche Jr., *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequence* (New York, N.Y.: AMS Press, 1989), chap. 1.

[59] A similar case of a man who wrote openly autobiographical verse is that of the seventeenth century Pushtun tribal leader and poet Khushāl Khan Khattak.

The Literary Apprentice: The Turan Period

After describing his brief infatuation in Andijan in the spring of 1500, a period when Bābur says he says he was composing short poems in Persian, he never again alludes to writing Persian verse, although he occasionally quotes Persian poems he did write. His subsequent preoccupation with Turkī reinforces the impression that Bābur initially wrote in Persian because, like so many other Turks, he had heard so much Persian poetry recited he could cobble together pre-packaged images at least sufficient for generic Persian love couplets. Otherwise growing up in a largely Turkī-speaking environment he may not have felt comfortable in Persian. At least that is partly suggested when he discusses writing poetry during his second occupation of Samarqand during the late autumn and spring of 1500-1501. It was then that Bābur received a letter from *Navā'ī* and replied to him, copying a one line, that is two-stanza Turkī verse on the back of the message.

With this allusion to his contact with the great man Bābur begins what eventually amounts to an essay on poets and poetry made up of scattered but repeated references to the poetic art that interrupt his political narrative. His interest in verse is marked by the passion he brings to literary criticism and the publicity he gives to his own efforts to master poetic composition. Kings are, as Ibn Buluggīn remarked, "wont" to write poetry in their "pastimes," but Bābur was far more ambitious, both in his desire to master verse composition as also in his intent to advertise his literary skills. In this particular instance, after mentioning his exchange of letters with Navā'ī, Bābur digresses at length about poets and poetry. In particular, he says that the Harat poet and musician Bannā'ī was in Samarqand during this period, having left Harat after insulting Navā'ī in an exchange of witticisms.

As Bābur describes the incident in Turkī, before shifting to Persian to quote Navā'ī and Bannā'ī, once at a chess party Navā'ī stretched out his leg and touched Bannā'ī's behind, then said jestingly [in Persian], "What a great nuisance it is. In Harat when you extend your leg you hit the ass of a poet." Bannā'ī then replied [in Persian], "If you tuck in [your leg] you will also meet the ass

See D. N. Mackenzie ed. and trans., *Poems from the Divan of Khushāl Khān Khattak* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965).

of a poet." The exchange in which *kūn*, "backside" or "ass" is probably meant to evoke both the animal and the word's metaphorical meaning of a "fool," reflected the intense competition for literary precedence in Harat that supposedly and perhaps actually led Bannāʾī to leave Harat for greener literary pastures in Mawarannahr.[60] Bābur says Bannāʾī had left the city once before because of Navāʾī's shabby treatment of him. According to Bābur, Bannāʾī fired off a verbal parting shot on his way out of Harat on this occasion. He had a new saddle-blanket made for his donkey and by calling it an "ʿAlī Shīrī," and riding out of town sitting on the blanket, thereby put Navāʾī's ass in its place and trumped the earlier exchange he had with him in the *majlis*.[61]

Bannāʾī then traveled to Samarqand to serve Shībānī Khan, who in 1500 had just seized the city from Bābur's young cousin, Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā. The poet thus found himself in the city when Bābur took it by surprise attack a short time later. After first exiling him to nearby Shahr-i sabz, Bābur allowed the Bannāʾī to return to Samarqand because he was an "educated" man. He remained there to seek patronage from Bābur and wrote a four line poem, which Bābur calls a *rubāʿī* but one perhaps better labeled as a *dūbaytī*, simply a two-line or four-stanza poem, in which the final words of all four lines rhyme. After declaring in the first two stanzas that he had neither food nor money, Bannāʾī asked in the final two stanzas how such an impoverished person could dedicate himself to *ʿilm u hunar*, knowledge and art. Bābur then replied with a Turkī rather than a Persian *rubāʿī* that Bannāʾī's wish would be granted; he would receive both an *inʿām* and a *vaẓīfah,* rent-free land and a pension.

His use of Turkī here may indicate he felt more comfortable spontaneously composing verse in his native language rather than in Persian. Bannāʾī himself replied in Turkī praising Bābur as the future *shāh* of land and sea, and using Bābur's rhyme while introducing a secondary rhyme as well. Perhaps Bannāʾī should have stuck to Persian, as Bābur indicates his secondary rhyme scheme was faulty, his first criticism of a well-known poet in his memoirs. To make his point about Bannāʾī's error Bābur recalls that another

[60] Thus the common phrase "*kūn-i khar*," literally the "ass of an ass" or "*kūn-kharī*." "folly."
[61] BN-M, fs. 180a-b.

poet who had come from Shahr-i sabz to Samarqand at this time, criticized Bannāʾī's rhyme and composed another Turkī quatrain as an improvement.[62] Later in the text when he surveys Harat poets, Bābur damns Bannāʾī with faint praise, perhaps remembering all the while that the poet had returned to Harat in 1507 to be installed as the new arbiter of the city's literati by Bābur's arch-enemy, Shībānī Khan.[63]

In commenting on his reply to Bannāʾī, Bābur remarks that in this *fursat*, this leisurely interval—implicitly alluding again to his cycles of fortune, *fatrat* and *fursat*—he himself wrote poems of one or two lines, two or four stanzas. Apart from the *rubāʿī* he wrote to Bannāʾī, he doesn't quote any of these verses and the reply to Bannāʾī is also not included in Bābur's *dīwān*, his collection of poems. His two-line poems may possibly be represented in his collected works by one of the more than seventy-five *matlaʿiyyāt*, that is the opening lines of unfinished verses.[64] He also mentions that up to this time he had not yet written a *ghazal*, and he did not complete one until two years later. One of the *rubāʿī* he may have written during this interregnum is the listed first among his other quatrains. This is made likely not only by the general chronological ordering of his poems, but by the relative simplicity of this verse, which otherwise possesses in abbreviated form many of the themes or motifs of the stereotypical lyric: love, union, separation and discontent. Here is a poem which is probably autobiographical only in the sense that it represents a poet's early work.

ای کل نی اوچون قاتینکدا مین خوار اولدوم
یوز محنت و اندوه بیله یار اولدوم
وصلینك بیله بسیار سیویندیم اول
هجرینگ بیله عاقبت کرفتار اولدوم

*

O rose, why did I become abject in your presence?
With a hundred troubles and afflictions I became a lover.

[62] BN-M, f. 87a.

[63] BN-M, f. 206a. See especially the obscene joke that Bābur repeats about Bannāʾī after Shībānī appointed him to supervise the educated men of Harat.

[64] Yücel, 288-301. Yücel gives seventy-eight of these. He also lists a number of unfinished *ghazal*s.

With our union I first fell deeply in love.
Separated from you I became a captive.[65]

Bābur's subsequent literary education proceeded in fits and starts, or in his terms: *fatratlar* and *fursatlar*. Between the late fall of 1501 and June of 1502 he had little time for sustained writing or study of poetry as he and his few supporters were little more than refugees. During the winter of 1501-02 and the following spring they moved about the hill country east-northeast of Samarqand, while Uzbek troops rode out from Samarqand to raid towns in the region. Nonetheless, even while taking refuge in a small village to avoid Uzbek horsemen, Bābur was apparently inspired by the visit of a poet from Hisar, Mullā Hajrī, who came to offer his respects and presumably to seek Bābur's patronage—it is tempting to think he must have been a very young or very bad poet to have sought Bābur's support just then. "At that time," Bābur writes, I "recited" the *matla*ʿ the opening line or two stanzas of a poem.

تکلف هر نیچه صورت [ته] بولسه اندین ارتوقسین
سینی جان دیرلار اما بی تکلف جاندین ارتوقسین
*

However artfully you are portrayed, you are yet more than this.
They call you soul, but truly you are greater than soul.[66]

He subsequently used this *matla*ʿ as the opening lines for a ghazal he probably finished in Kabul, given its placement in his *dīwān* as the thirty-second or thirty-fifth ghazal.[67] It has all the characteristics of a stereotypical lyric in which the poet speaks of going mad in the presence of the beloved's unrivaled beauty.

Bābur may have written a few short poems during these months, but by his own account it was not until he had taken refuge in Tashkent with his *Khan dada*, his Chaghatay Mongol uncle Mahmūd Khan, that he had time seriously to study the poetic art. After describing his decision to ride to Tashkent from nearby Shahrukhiyah on June 16, the first thing Bābur mentions about his sojourn in the city is his uncertainty about the rhyme scheme of a quatrain he had composed. "I had, writes Bābur, recited [orally composed] this *rubāʿī*. I was doubtful about the proper rhyme. At that time I

[65] Köprülü, no. 1 p. 308 and Yücel, no. 133, p. 214.
[66] BN-M, f. 99a.
[67] Stebleva, 240 lists it as number 32. Yücel, 138, lists it as number 35.

had not studied the technical aspects of verse."[68] It was at this point he asked for his uncle's literary advice and found it wanting.[69] The poem he quotes in the text, the third Turkī *rubāʿī* listed in most collections of his verse, has the normal rhyme scheme aaba, and some echoes of stereotypical lyrical themes and vocabulary. However, as has been mentioned in the narrative of events for this year, this poem was an unmistakable occasional poem that artistically alluded to Bābur's desperate state in 1502. The entire quatrain reads as follows.

یاد ایتماس ایمیش کیشی نی محنت ته کیشی
شاد ایتماس ایمیش کونکلنی غربت ته کیشی
کونکلوم بو غریبلیق ته شاد اولمادی [هیچ]
غربت ته سیوونماس ایرمیش البته کیشی
*

No one cares for a man in peril.
No one gladdens the exile's heart.
My heart has found no joy in this exiled state.
Certainly no one takes joy from exile.[70]

The rhyme here is located in the next to the last word in the first, second and third stanzas: (*mihn*) *attah* (in peril), (*ghurb*) *attah* (in exile) and (*alb*) *attah* (certainly). The last word, *kishi* or person, is in the technical terms of Arabo-Persian prosody, the *radīf*, the word following the rhyme, but not, since the same word is repeated, the rhyme itself.[71] Bābur himself remarks when discussing his uncertainties of the rhyme scheme of this poem that he later learned that in Turkī versification the t and d were interchangeable, as were gh, q and k. Eventually he incorporated the knowledge of such technicalities into his treatise on Turkī prosody.

If Bābur didn't explain the context in which he wrote this poem it might possibly be interpreted as a lyrical composition, but even without the context its occasional nature is suggested by the fact

[68] BN-M, fs. 99b-100a.
[69] See above chapter 2, "The Tīmūrid Denouement."
[70] BN-M, f. 100. Yücel, no. 135, p. 214.
[71] I. V. Stebleva discusses the *radīf* at length in her important study of Turkī verse, *Ritm i Smysl v klassicheskoī tyurkoyaziychnoī poèzii* (Moskva: "Nauka," 1993), chapter 3. One of the most lucid introductions to the *radīf*, giving both Persian and Turkī examples, is the article by W. P. Heinrichs, "Radīf," *EI2*, 8, 368-70.

that in it Bābur doesn'ʾt even allude to a "beloved," the staple subject of the lyric. He does use one of the lyric's typical ideas of *ghurbat*, separation, unrequited love or exile to express his feelings. *Ghurbat* as exile is the leitmotif of Bābur's life—from Ferghanah, Samarqand and finally from Kabul, for which the typical lyrical vocabulary supplied a convenient vocabulary.[72] In this Turkī *rubāʿī* he gives artistic vent to his political frustration in the lyrical idiom. The poem is one of earliest examples of Bābur's adaptation of the lyrical genres to comment on his daily life.

While Persian literary tradition tolerated this self-expression in the quatrain, few poets took such liberties with the *ghazal* form. Yet Bābur seems to have done this also with his first complete ghazal —and with many others later—which he completed shortly after arriving in Tashkent in mid-June, 1502. In the course of describing a classic Mongol hunt in which horsemen form an enormous circle and drive the game in from all sides, Bābur writes that in the camp after the hunt he finished the first complete *ghazal* he had written. The significance of this poem is more ambiguous than Bābur's earlier Turkī *rubāʿī*, but like that quatrain it seems to be an occasional poem that in the *matlaʿ* at least reflects the emotions aroused in him by defeat, betrayal and exile that he explicitly describes in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*.

Bābur includes only the *matlaʿ*, the opening *bayt* or couplet of this *ghazal* in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*, the remaining five couplets are included as part of the entire poem listed as the first *ghazal* in his collected verse.[73] The way Bābur describes it he probably wrote these opening lines earlier and then finished the remainder of the poem in the hunting camp. The *matlaʿ* seems to echo the mournful sentiment of the "exile" *rubāʿī* he read to Mahmūd Khan.

جانیم دین اوزکا یار وفادار تاپمادیم
کونکلوم دین اوزکا محرم اسرار تاپمادیم
*

Except my soul no other true love did I find.
Except my heart no other intimate friend did I find.[74]

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[72] *Ghurbat* or exile was one of the principle themes of the Ghaznavid court poet Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān of Lahore (d. 1121) and he was not the first to exploit this image. See Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier*, especially 47-56.

[73] Stebleva, 209, and Yücel, no. 6, p. 121.

[74] BN-M, f. 101b. The verb here, *tapmaq*, is sometimes also translated by Navāʾī as "to love" or "adore."

The likelihood—likelihood not certainty—that these lines allude to his seemingly hopeless political situation in the spring and early summer of 1502 is based partly on the quality of the "exile" *rubāʿī* and partly on the deviation of these lines from the normal opening couplet of *ghazal*s. In most Persian, Turkī and Ottoman Turkish *ghazal*s the author would begin with an evocation of the beloved. Even though this was Bābur's first complete *ghazal* in which, presumably, he would have tried to adhere to classic norms as closely as possible, he does not even allude to the snares of love until the second stanza of the second couplet.[75] Then only in the third couplet does this poem seem to blossom, like the many roses of this genre, into a full blown lyric poem.

جانیمدیك اوزکا جان دل افکار کورمادیم
کونگلوم گیبی کونگولنی گرفتار تابمادیم
*

Except my soul I did not see another soul as melancholy.
I did not find a captive heart similar to mine.

اوسروك کوزیکا تا که کونکول بولدی مبتلا
هرکز بو تیلبه نی ینه هشیار تابمادیم
*

Since the heart has been afflicted by his/her intoxicating eyes,
Never again did I recover sanity after such madness.

The remaining couplets adhere to the classic ghazal format and Bābur concludes with an altogether stereotypical reference to his resigned suffering in the first stanza of the *maqtaʿ* or concluding couplet.

بابر اوزونکنی اورکاتاکور یار سیز...
*

Bābur, teach thyself to be loveless...[76]

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[75] This discussion is based upon the acute analysis of Stebleva, *Semantika Gazeleī Babura*, 163-68,

[76] Ibid., 209.

Like many other verses this poem has two evident meanings for Bābur's life. On the one hand it demonstrates his continuing early effort to learn and practice the poetic art. On the other hand it seems to be an early example of the complexities of Bābur's compositions, a case where he fits a couplet composed as an occasional verse reflecting his personal situation to stereotypical lines of a classic *ghazal*.

Kabul Lyrics

After describing the completion of his first Turkī *ghazal* at the hunting camp, Bābur doesn't mention writing poetry again until he narrates the years of his life from 1504-1525, when he lived in or operated out of Kabul. The next poem he mentions writing he dates to 1505, but its placement in his *dīwān* as the fifteenth *ghazal* indicates that between 1502 and 1505 he wrote at least a dozen of these lyrical poems. Since these verses cannot be dated it is impossible to connect them with specific events, although in some cases it is tempting to try to do so. The opening phrase of his second *ghazal*, for example, reads "I have been exiled and separated from friends."[77] As in the first *ghazal* these lines are atypical for the genre and may refer to his situation between 1502 and the time he arrived in Kabul in 1504. The possibility exists that the opening lines of both the first and second *ghazal* reflect his inexperience with the genre. Yet not only had he heard hundreds of such poems, but the other *ghazal*s Bābur evidently wrote in this three-year period do follow the usual lyrical pattern of invoking the beloved in the opening couplet.

The fourth *ghazal* opens with the couplet:

ساچی نینگ سودا سی توشتی باشیمی باش دین ینه
تیره بولدی روزکاریم اول قرا قاش دین ینه

*

Once and again her tresses fell upon my head.
And again my life was darkened by this black eyebrow.[78]

[77] Stebleva, 210 and Yücel, no. 7, 121-22.
[78] Ibid., 212 and Yücel, no. 9, 122-23.

Then again in the eighth *ghazal* Bābur has composed another typical lyrical poem that has no obvious connection with any event, it seems significant only as an example of his experimental early verse.

اول که منکا یار دلنواز کورونـدی
جورنـی کورساتتـی کوب و آز کوروندی
بولدی باشیم پست پای بوسی دا آخر
کرچه بورون آسرو سرفراز کوروندی
سنینگ اوچون اول که باشین اوینمادی هیچ
سنکا عجایب که عشق باز کوروندی
عشق باریدا صلاح توبه و تقوی
بارجمسی تحقیق بیل مجاز کوروندی
دشمن جان اولدی نی قیلای سنکا بابر
اول که منکا یار دلنواز کوروندی

She who seemed to me a soothing beloved,
She was more than cruel and less than kind.
At last my head abjectly kissed her foot.
Although previously it was very proud.
To you she who never toyed with your head,
You are astonished that she seemed amorous.
In love's burden the probity of repentance and piety,
Knowing the truth all this seems like a metaphor.
She became the enemy of the soul, what shall she do to you, Bābur.
She who seemed to me like a soothing beloved.[79]

Another *ghazal* Bābur definitely dates to 1505, and which he may have written a year earlier, is itself partly an example of his continuing output of these types of poems, but it also illustrates the diverse ways in which his poetry was linked with the events of his life. This poem and three others he wrote in 1506 or 1507 offer examples of the muted connection between some of Bābur's verses and his life. These verses also show he was becoming a more inventive, subtle poet within the confines of the classical tradition.

[79] Stebleva, 216 & 63-4 and Yücel, no. 13, p. 125.

Bābur dates the first of these *ghazal*s to 21 March 1505, the spring solstice and *naurūz*, the new year of the Iranian solar calendar. He remarks that in 1505 this date coincided with ʿĪd al-Fitr, the date on the Islamic lunar calendar when Muslims celebrate the end of the Ramadan fast. Bābur, though, may have slightly mistaken these dates as the festivals coincided more nearly in 1504—or perhaps he was just taking poetic license.[80] The conjunction of calendars and festivals apparently prompted him to write the poem, or at least to compose the *matla*ʿ and *maqta*ʿ, the opening and closing couplets, for he begins and ends the *ghazal* with allusions to this coincidence and a literary play on the metaphorical significance of the moon as the face of the beloved. Bābur only quotes these opening and closing couplets in his memoirs, perhaps because his witty imagery is confined to those lines.

یانکی آی یار یوزی بیرله کوروب ایل شاد بیرم لار
منکا یوز و قاشینکدین آیرو بیرم آییدا غم لار
——————— bayts 2-6
یوزی نوروزی وصلی عیدنی بابر غنیمت توت
که موندین یخشی بولماس بولسه یوز نوروز [و] بیرم لار

———————————————

On seeing the new moon with the beloved's face,
People are joyous at the festivals.
As for me separated from thy face and brows,
the festivals are sad.
——————— couplets 2-6
Bābur seize the moment of this festive conjunction,
the face of the new year.
Festivals could not be better than this,
Even with a hundred new years.[81]

The five middle couplets of this poem contain stereotypical lyrical imagery that has none of the inventiveness of these first and last couplets. They describe, first, how the lyrical hero's infatuation

[80] Stebleva, 174-75 adroitly makes this observation in her analysis of this poem.
[81] Ibid., 223 and Yücel, no. 20, p. 129.

causes his body to twist, similar to the hyacinth-like curls on the face of the beloved. Then blown aside by the lover's breath the beloved's tresses reveal the perspiration on her/his face resembling evening dew on a rose. Finally, lamenting in typical fashion with "sighs and groans," which Bābur contrasts with quiet convivial drinking parties with companions, he says that advice is useless for him because love has destroyed his heart.

A second poem now found only in the *dīwān* and not in the *Vaqā'i'* can also be dated to late 1506 or early 1507, both on the basis of its number, forty-four, and an explicit reference to Kabul. The placement of the poem and the meaning of the penultimate couplet strongly suggest it was written in December 1506 when Bābur was visiting Harat. In that couplet Bābur writes, using the commonly invoked metaphor of *shāh* for the beloved:

کابول ساری کر عزیمت اتسانك

قربان قیلای اوزنی سنکا ای شاه

If you travel on the road to Kabul,
Let me offer myself to you, o Shāh.[82]

In this verse Bābur was probably alluding to his second engagement, to his paternal cousin, Ma'sūmah Sultān Begim, which was arranged when he visited Harat in December 1506.[83] The girl was to be sent on to Kabul later after Bābur returned there, and she arrived in the city and was married to Bābur in the late summer, 1507. The first six couplets of the *ghazal* are impeccably generic and of no special interest, but in the sixth Bābur writes, using the commonly invoked metaphor *shāh* for the beloved. The erotic focus of this poem also offers another cautionary note about basing facile and monolithic generalizations about authors' sexual orientations on a few widely scattered poems. Indeed, these two examples suggest that in most cases when such judgments are made about the poorly documented lives of pre-modern Muslim writers they are in fact mere "vacuous literary chitchat."

The third of these three *ghazal*s, and the second dated one, is another poem with an atypical *matla'* that reflects one of Bābur's

[82] Stebleva, 252.
[83] BN-M, fs., 191a-192b.

worst instances of physical suffering. Just after his engagement Bābur left Harat to return to Kabul. Riding out of the city on December 23rd he and his men became lost in a mountain snowstorm in late January or early February 1507. This was the time he remembered as one in which "great alarm and hardships were suffered, more than at any period of life." "This *matla'*," he writes, "was done on that occasion."[84]

چرخ نینك مین كورماكان جور و جفاسی قالدی مو؟

خسته كونكلوم چیكماكان درد و بلاسی قالدی مو؟

*

Does there remain for me unseen any cruelty or oppression of fate?
Shall my wounded heart yet know unknown pain or suffering?[85]

Nowhere in his memoir does Bābur again allude to this couplet, but in his *diwān* it represents the opening lines of his forty-fifth *ghazal*, only one of two in which he uses the interrogative refrain. Bābur's explanation and the verse itself unmistakably marks the *matla'* as an occasional poem. The couplet is an artistic rendering of his prose narrative. It is a literary abstraction, a poetic universalization of his near-fatal ride which Bābur expresses in the typical language of the *ghazal*, the idiom of cruelty, oppression and the wounded heart. Like his first Turkī *ghazal* this poem also has a semantic shift in the third couplet where Bābur complains that the sun, his metaphorical beloved, has slain him. In this poem, though, he employs even less of the stock imagery—no evocation of the beloved's eyes or eyebrows, his/her hyacinth-like hair, the entrancing slim figure so like the archer's bow—not to mention the erotic fuzz on the cheek or the pearl-like teeth. Here Bābur is not speaking from within the allegorical Iranian garden with its roses and nightingales.[86] Read in isolation the final line of the *maqta'* might be understood as the typical resigned complaint of the melancholy lover, but read against the *matla'* and Bābur's prose narrative it seems to reflect a particular emotional moment.

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[84] BN-M, f. 193b.

[85] Ibid., f. 193b.

[86] Julie Scott Meisami, "Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition: Nezami, Rumi and Hafez," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985), 229-60.

تینکری اوچون دی بو عالم نینك صفاسی قالدی مو؟

*

Remains there any of the world's pleasures?
Speak for God's sake![87]

Bābur may have finished this entire poem sometime during the winter or spring of 1507, even though he was quite busy when he first returned to Kabul suppressing an abortive coup in the city. The likelihood that this date is correct is suggested by its placement in his *dīwān* as the forty-fifth *ghazal*, for according to the *Vaqā'i'* he was moved to write the *ghazal* listed as number forty-six in April or May 1507 after he visited the flower-strewn meadows of Gulbahar, the "Rose" or "Flower of Spring" slope north of Kabul. Viewing this *dāman* or mountain skirt where "many different tulips bloom," the alpine pasture where, he remarks in this passage, he once had the tulip varieties counted, Bābur quotes another unnamed poet's Turkī couplet praising Kabul and Gulbahar in springtime. He says he then completed "this" *ghazal*, whose *matla'* he quotes, and which Annette Beveridge, echoing Robert Burns's line, "My love is like a red, red rose," artfully renders as follows.

مینینك کونکلوم که کل نینك غنجه سی دیك ته بته قاندور
اکر یوز مینك بهار اولسه اجیلماغی نی امکاندور

*

My heart, like the bud of a red, red rose,
Lies fold within fold aflame;
Would the breath of even a myriad Springs,
Blow my heart's bud to a rose.[88]

The text of the entire ghazal with a more prosaic translation is as follows:

منینك کونکلوم که کل نینك غنجه سی دیکته ته بته قان دور
اکر یوز مینك بهار اولسه آجیلماغی نی امکان دور
اکر اول قاشی یاسیز باغ کشتین آرزو قیلسام
کوزومکا اوق دورور سرو و کونکولکا غنجیه بیکان دور
بهار و باغ سیرینی نی قیلای کیم داستانیم نینك

[87] Stebleva, 253.
[88] BN-B, p. 321.

یوزی کول زلفی سنبل قامتی سرو خرامان دور
وصالی لذتی دین روح تابماغلیق ایرور دشوار
فراقی شد یندا یوقسا جان بیرماکلیك آسان دور
باشیدین ایورولور ارمانی بیرلا اولدوم ای بابر

منینك نعشیم نی باری اول پری کوییدین ایلان دور

Petal upon petal, my heart is like the rosebud.
If there would be even 100,000 springs it would not open.
If I wished to pass through the garden without the one whose
brow is a bow,
The flowering cypress would be like an arrow for the eye
and a fire for the heart.
Why should I stroll in the garden in spring,
since in my poem
The beloved's face is a flower, his/her hair-a hyacinth
and body-a cypress.
Finding ease in the pleasure of union is difficult.
While relinquishing life due to the pain of separation is easy.
Turning round her head, I have died grief-stricken, O Bābur,
Let my bier encircle that fairy-world.[89]

This poem illustrates the interpenetration of art and life—or of poetry and this particular life. Saʿdī and Hāfiz set so many of their *ghazal*s in gardens that Bābur or anyone with poetic ambitions and remotely familiar with the oft-sung verses of these poets would probably have memorized hundreds of paradisiacal literary settings.[90] Nothing would have been more natural, or more culturally suggested, than for an aspiring lyric poet to respond to visions of wildflowers in spring meadows with a *ghazal*. Given the name of this mountain slope, Gulbahar, the temptation must have been irresistible. Bābur responded to this scene as most other classically-trained writers probably would have done. He ignored the natural beauty before him and, reaching into the stereotypical lyrical vocabulary, produced a poem echoing his momentary delight but conforming

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[89] Stebleva, 254 and 176.

[90] See especially Julie Scott Meisami, "The Body as Garden: Nature and Sexuality in Persian Poetry," *Eddebiyat* NS 6, 2 (1995), 245-74.

to the dictates of the *ghazal* genre. Here was the interiorized, self-referential poetic *gulistān* or rose garden made famous by Saʿdī's poem of the same name. It was the self-contained literary garden of many writers, including later Indo-Muslim Persian and Urdu poets who often found the scent of imagined roses so intoxicating some even closed their windows to the actual beauties of nature, perhaps understandable in the Indian climate where roses usually wilted and nightingales rarely sang.[91] Normally it would be "extremely strained and very doubtful" to find an experiential reference for such a poem.[92] It would, that is, be analogous to the "vacuous literary chitchat" of scholars who strain to link Shakespeare's sonnets to the Elizabethan poet's life. In this instance, however, the connection is unmistakable, illustrating the subtle ways in which a poet's works may be connected to his everyday life.

A fourth *ghazal*, probably written sometime before the period of these dated poems, seems one of the most existential of all Bābur's lyrics, in fact an intense cri de coeur. His failure to date it means that his original reason for writing the poem will probably never be known. The placement of this particular *ghazal* as number 21 in his *dīwān*, suggests it was probably written in 1505 or early 1506, months before he traveled to Harat, and it may refer to any number of events during this period, such as his feeling that his brothers Jahāngīr and Nāsir Mīrzā had been disloyal to him. However, the verse is particularly intriguing, because he quotes the *matlaʿ* in his narrative of events for the summer of 1500. Bābur quotes the couplet to punctuate a complaint he had about Khusrau Shāh when he passed through his territories on his way to stage his surprise attack on the Uzbeks in Samarqand in the summer of 1500. Having remarked of the despised Khusrau Shāh that he treated Bābur worse than one of his own servants, Bābur quotes the following couplet, but does not say when he wrote the lines, which he normally does if a verse or an entire poem dates from the exact time covered in the narrative.

کیم کوروبدور ای کونکول اهل جهان دین یخشیلیغ
کیم که اندین یخشی یوق کوز توتمه اندین یخشیلغ

[91] Frances W. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness* Urdu Poetry and Its Critics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 104.
[92] Stebleva, 178.

Who, o heart, sees good from the people of the world?
Who that has no good from them, expect no good.[93]

The remainder of the poem is remarkable for its deviation from classic lyrical norms. While the stoic opening might blend easily into a second couplet in which the author depicts the indifference of his beloved, Bābur alludes only to "heart-ravishers" but otherwise sustains a kind of existential tone throughout the remainder of the *ghazal.*

بو زمان نی نفی قیلسام عیب قیلمه ای رفیق
کورمادیم هرکز نیتایین بو زمان دین یخشی لیغ
دلربالاردین یمانلیق کیلدی محزون کونکلومه
کیلمادی جانیمغه هیچ آرام جان دین یخشی لیغ
ای کونکول جون یخشیدین کوردونك یمانلیق آسروکوب
ایمدی کوز توتماق نی یعنی هر یماندین یخشی لیغ
باری ایلکا یخشی لیغ قیلغیل که موندین یخشی یوق
کیم دیکای لار دهر ارا قالدی فلاندین یخشی لیغ
یخشی لیق اهل جهاندا ایستاما بابر کیبی
کیم کوروب دور ای کونکول اهل جهان دین یخشی لیغ

If I proscribe this time do not blame me, o friend.
I have never seen good in this time, what shall I do?
From heart-ravishers came evil, my afflicted heart.
Nothing good came to my soul from any tranquil soul.
O heart since you have seen so much evil from good,
Now why do you expect good from evil?
Do good to all other people for there is no good other than this,
That people will say 'from so-and-so good was left in the world.'
Do not like Bābur seek good from the people of the world.
Who, o heart, sees good from the people of the world?[94]

[93] BN-M, f. 82a.
[94] Stebleva, no. 21, p. 229 and Yücel no. 24, p. 132.

This is not the first time in his narrative Bābur lifts material from a poem written during the Kabul period to illustrate a memory from the Turan years. One of the lines he quotes to describe his infatuation in 1500 for the boy Bāburī is a Turkī couplet which represents the fourth couplet of *ghazal* ninety-five.[95]

The poems Bābur dates by references in the *Vaqā'i'* reveal a subtle but discernible relationship between his life and art during the late Turan and Kabul periods of his life. Unfortunately it is impossible to make the same connections for most of the verses he wrote between 1507 and 1526. Not only is the text missing for the years 1508-1519 and 1520-1526, but he rarely discusses the craft of poetry in the remaining extant pages that cover about a month in May 1508, the year 1519, another month from December 1519 to January 1520 and the period from November 1525 until September 1529. Yet, Bābur probably wrote most of his verses during the Kabul and Indian years of his life. It is quite likely that the majority of his *ghazal*s and *rubā'iyāt* date to the decade before he left Kabul in November 1525 to invade India, a time following his final expulsion from Mawarannahr, when he ruled from Kabul in relative security and thus had the leisure to write. He himself mentions that in July 1519 he sent a copy of one of his *dīwān*s to Samarqand, perhaps to his half-sister, Mihrbān(u) Khanïm, who was then living in the Uzbek-controlled city.[96] This is the first of two collections he acknowledges completing. The other, known as the Indian or Rampur *dīwān,* contains a small collection of poems, largely *rubā'iyāt*, Bābur wrote in India, the completion of which he dates to December 1528.[97]

Beyond observing that the majority of the *ghazal*s and *rubā'iyāt* that Bābur wrote between 1507 and 1526 appear to be variants on the lyrical theme, it is not possible in most cases even to hazard a guess as to how these poems may immediately reflect his life. Merely knowing how subtle those connections are in the dated poems of the late Ferghanah and early Kabul period would make unsubstantiated speculation about the origin of these verses even

[95] BN-M, f. 76a and Stebleva, 303.

[96] BN-M, f. 237b. Annette Beveridge makes the identification. BN-B, p. 402.

[97] See especially BN-B, Appendix Q, "Concerning the Rampur Dīwān," and Azimdzhanova, *Indiīskiī Diwan Bābura* (Tashkent: "Fan," 1966), 39.

more irresponsible than Bābur was himself when he claimed to have seized one hundred thousand sheep from Afghān tribesmen. However, Bābur wrote several *rubāʿiyāt* in 1519 that can be dated either from his references in the memoirs or the combined evidence of the subject and placement in his collected poems. Only in a few cases can the poems be approximately dated and assumed to refer to what is known of Bābur's life from his memoirs.

The first poem that Bābur quotes in the *Vaqāʾiʿ* after the narrative resumes in 1519 is yet another illustration of how a poem *was* prompted by specific events, even if outwardly it appears to be merely a stock lyrical verse unconnected with anything beyond his literary ambition. Alluding to his recent capture of the fortress of Bajaur, Bābur says he sent his old companion, Khwājah Kalān, back to govern the fortress on the 19th of January 1519. Writing for unexplained reasons in Persian, Bābur describes the separation from his close friend in the typical lyrical idiom of the distraught lover, and includes a pun on the word Bajaur in the fourth line of a *dū-baytī*, or two-couplet verse in which "forcefully" or *bajaur* alludes to Khwājah Kalān's appointment to the fortress-town Bajaur.

قرار و عهد بیار اینچنین نبود مرا
گزید هجر و مرا کرد بیقرار آخر
بعشوه های زمانه چه چاره سازد کس
بجور کرد جدا یارا ز یار آخر

*

Such was not my pact and covenant with the beloved/friend.
Finally, he chose parting and inconstancy to me,
What could someone do against the caprice of fortune,
Finally it forcefully separated lover/comrade from beloved/ companion.[98]

A second poem, a *rubāʿī*, reflects the more flexible use of these quatrains, because it "celebrates" or at least "commemorates" intoxication, but not of the lover for the beloved. This Turkī poem was

[98] BN-M, f. 219a.

almost certainly written after Bābur began drinking, that is sometime after taking Samarqand for the third and last time and prior to swearing off alcohol before facing the Rajputs in India in 1527.

کیلدی رمضان و مین تقی باده پرست
عید اولدی و ذکر می قیلورمین پیوست
نی روزه و نی نماز ییل لار آیلار
تون کون می و معجون بیله دیوانه و مست

*

Ramadan came and I a pious wine-sot.
ʿĪd arrived and with it the remembrance of wine.
Neither fasting nor prayer [but] years, months,
Nights and days with wine and *maʿjūn*, crazy and drunk.[99]

It is quite likely that this poem was written in the spring of 1519. Not only was that a time in which Bābur was drinking almost continuously, but it is listed in his collected verse just three quatrains before another *rubāʿī* which he mentions composing in June 1519.

Bābur wrote this third *rubāʿī* at a party where he uncharacteristically declined to drink, apparently because he was just then recovering from a fever he had contracted more than two weeks earlier. Just after celebrating the wedding of two children of his long-time compatriots, the son of Qāsim Beg and the daughter Nizām al-Dīn ʿAlī Barlas Khalīfah, he mentions that he hosted a gathering, *Chanār Bāghning Eshiki-da*, at the Gate of the Plane-Tree Garden. He and his friends gathered in a small white arbor or kiosk, where Bābur says he sometimes sat, where they were joined by "Ghiyās the buffoon." Bābur, after recalling how he jokingly told his friends that as he was not drinking that day he would soberly observe the relations between the sober and the drunk, said that the following impromptu *rubāʿī* "was then composed" and sent to a the grandson of Zūʿn-nūn Arghun, who was also hosting a gathering at his nearby house.

[99] Köprürü, no. 160, p. 324 and Yücel, no. 297, p. 255.

احباب که بزمیدا کلستان خس تور

یوق لیك الار بزمیدا بیزکا دستور

اول جمع دا کر حضور [و] جمعیت بار

یوز شکر بو جمع بیحضور ایرماس تور

*

Friends who are at the banquet, are a beautiful garden.
Although they gave us no leave to attend.
If there is ease in that gathering,
A hundred thanks the gathering is not troubled.[100]

This is an unambiguously occasional *rubāʿī.*

The next poem he quotes is equally occasional, written in fact on the outside of the *dīwān* he sent to Samarqand to Pulād Sultān, the son of the Uzbek leader, in July 1519. However, it is difficult to understand why Bābur would send poetry to an Uzbek noble; it may have been intended for Pulād Sultān's mother, who may have been Bābur's half-sister, Mihrbān(u).[101] Not only does Bābur invoke the *harīm*, the "sanctuary" or women's quarters of the first line, but he follows that by stressing the "wound of separation," an unlikely sentiment to address to an Uzbek, but a natural expression towards a relative not seen since youth. Nonetheless, in the fourth line Bābur has also constructed a play on Pulād Sultān's name, as *pulād* means steel, so the poem might have been intended for both mother and son in subtly different ways.[102]

اول سرو نینك حریمیغه کر یتسناك ای صبا

بیر کیل بو هجر خسته سی دین یاد کونکلیکا

[100] BN-M, f. 237a. Bābur does not explicitly say he wrote this poem. However, both Köprülü and Yücel include it among his quatrains. Köprülü, no. 162, p. 324 and Yücel, no. 300, p. 256.

[101] Annette Beveridge suggests the possibility that Mihrbān(u) was the intended recipient. BN-B, p. 402.

[102] Bābur mentions Pulād Sultān as one of the Uzbeks who, along with Pulād Sultān's mother Mihrbān(u) Khanïm, sent ambassadors to Bābur's celebratory court gathering on December 19, 1528, a gathering that recognized his consolidation of power following his defeat of the Rajputs the year before. The fact that he mentions Mihrbān(u) Khanïm twice, the only woman whose name he mentions while describing this gathering, increases the likelihood that she was a person of consequence to him.

رحم ایلابان ساغینمادی بابر بار امید
سالغای خدای رحم نی پولاد کونکلی کا
*

O breeze if thou enter the sanctuary of that cypress,
Remind her/his heart of the wound of separation.
May God have mercy, she/he does not recall Bābur.
God grant mercy to her heart of steel.[103]

Apart from its interest as another of Bābur's poems that read in isolation from its immediate context seems like merely another stereotypical lyric, this verse is an important example of a class of poems known literally as "fragments" that Bābur and other writers frequently used expressly for occasional verse. In referring to the poem Bābur describes it as a *qitʿah*, a "fragment," "piece" or "morsel," even though it observes the rhyme scheme of the *rubāʿī*, the first, second and fourth lines ending in aleph. However, it diverges from the usual rhythm of a *rubāʿī*. The *qitʿah* represented a kind of free-verse form which "from the point of view of rhythm, rhyme, number of verses, language and subject, offered the poet the greatest freedom to express himself."[104] The *qitʿah*, that is, did not have a traditional subject and vocabulary that confined poets to a relatively narrow range of expression and ideas that especially restricted the *ghazal*. It allowed for and even encouraged individual expression unmediated by formal requirements of prosody. Navāʾī himself stressed the importance this genre had for him, remarking in the initial couplet of a *qitʿah*. "Such fragments that I have assembled, each one is a garden for resting the mind."[105] Like other poets Navāʾī used the fragment to express personal opinions, such as his well-known disdain for valuing literature according to the social standing of its author. "Do not enquire who spoke," Navāʾī urges, "but observe what he said."[106]

Bābur may not have read this particular verse of Navāʾī's, although on 15 December of that year he completed the task of arranging by meter a selection of Navāʾī's four *dīwān*s.[107] Whether

[103] BN-M, f. 238a and Yücel, no. 407, p. 283.
[104] Ziya Mauhad, "Qit'ah dar Shʿir-i Fārsī, Saʿdī, Shāʿir-i Qitʿahsirā," *Nashr Dānish* 14:4 (1373/1994), 16.
[105] Quoted by E. E. Bertel's, *Izbrannye Trudy*, *Navoi i Dzhami*, 95.
[106] Ibid., 95-96.
[107] BN-M, f. 248b.

or not Navā'ī influenced his thinking, Bābur does include a large number of poetic "fragments" in the last or Indian section of the *Vaqā'i'*. It is also true that many of the *rubā'ī* he wrote during the last five years of his life are transparently autobiographical. However, one of the problems in discussing the poetry of this period is that it can't be measured against the immediately preceding years. Not only does the text break off for nearly five years of "events" between January 1520 and November 1525, but there appears to be a gap of about the same period of time in Bābur's extant poetry as well. This hypothesis is based upon the relatively few number of *rubā'ī* listed in his collected verse for the period after he sent his first *dīwān* to Samarqand in 1519 and the date he completed his second collection of Indian poems in 1528. The last dated quatrain in the Kabul section of the *Vaqā'i'* is the verse Bābur composed at the party in June 1519. Yet in the collected verse only fourteen other *rubā'ī* are listed after this and before the first one known to be part of Bābur's second extant or *Rampur Dīwān*, dated 28 December 1528, and named after the north Indian city where the dated manuscript was discovered.[108]

Not only does it seem unlikely, not to say almost unbelievable, that he wrote so few of these poems during a five-year period when his security and power were growing, but India is not mentioned in any of these fourteen verses, but Kabul is, and Bābur does mention "Hind" in the first Turkī *rubā'ī* of the Rampur collection. A similar argument may be made about Bābur's *ghazal*s. Relatively few of those now extant are likely to have been written after 1520, for the 102nd *ghazal* is addressed to Bābur's cousin Ways Mīrzā or Mīrzā Khan, who died in 1520-21.[109] This poem could have been written considerably earlier, probably at almost any time between 1514, when Bābur returned to Kabul, and 1520. The final or 119th *ghazal* Bābur wrote when he was in India and it mentions India; it is

[108] See *Rampur Dīwān*, 1-43. and S. Azimdzhanova, *Indiiskii Dīwān Bābura*. The Rampur *dīwān* includes several of Bābur's Persian poems. See for example fs. 14a-b.

[109] Stebleva, 102 and Yücel, no. 105. The poem itself is tantalizingly interesting, as Bābur proclaims his great affection for his cousin. This may reflect time they spent together between 1512 and 1514 when Bābur wandered about Badakhshan, where Ways Mirza was trying to carve out his own Tīmūrid state. Bābur received an envoy and presents from Ways Mīrzā in July 1519, which may have been the last time he heard from his cousin before his death. BN-M, f. 237b.

included in the *Rampur Dīwān*. None of the *ghazal*s numbered 103-118 contain geographic references of any kind. It is likely, therefore, that Bābur compiled another *dīwān* that held *ghazal*s, *rubāʿiyāt* and other poems written between 1520 to 1526 or 1527, a *dīwān* that is now lost along with the text of this five-year period.

In fact Bābur does mention one poem he wrote just as he was leaving Afghanistan, a two-line Persian verse that he composed in December 1525 during the march from Kabul to attack Ibrāhīm Lūdī in Agra. After riding from Kabul to Adinahpur, where he and a small number of his companions camped in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'* while waiting for his son Humāyūn to arrive with troops from Badakhshān, Bābur and a few others got on a raft to float down the Kabul river towards the Khybar, while the main army marched overland. Drinking and taking *maʿjūn* by day while camping at night, they recited and spontaneously composed verse. At one point someone quoted a Persian verse of the Uzbek historian, Muhammad Salih, whose first line reads: "What can a person do with the beauty of each coquettish glance?" As a literary rejoinder Bābur then composed a ribald two-line Persian response that was simultaneously a satire of Salih's verse and a playful mockery of Mullā Alī Khan, one of the men on the raft, who, Bābur suggests, had already been the butt of jokes:

> What can a person do with a senseless [intoxicated] person like you?
> What can a person do with every asshole she-donkey?[110]

Bābur uses this incident to repent his habit of composing joking or obscene poems, probably a major part of most "entertainments" that had become a constant feature of his life in Kabul. His repentance undoubtedly came several years later as he was writing his memoirs and after he had repeatedly fallen sick in India. In the memoirs he uses this party publicly to announce his regret that he had ever composed trivial, joking or obscene verse. He does so by alluding to a vow he had already made about such poetry just after he had completed writing his versified treatise on Islamic law, the *Mubaiyin*, four years earlier in Kabul. Writing in an atypically pompous style, Bābur remarks:

> Before this whatever came into the mind, good or bad, joking or serious, was sometimes facetiously strung into verse. However shame-

[110] BN-M, f. 252b.

> ful and filthy the verse would be, it was inscribed. At the time I versified the *Mubaiyin* a thought had penetrated dull wit and doleful heart that it will be a pity that if from a tongue which expresses such utterances shall again translate its thoughts into shameful words. And it will be a pity that if from a heart that may express such elevated thoughts filthy ideas will reoccur. Since that time I repented and abstained from stringing satirical and jesting lines into verse. [However] while making this couplet [these ideas] did not occur [to me]. This virtue did not possess the heart.[111]

Bābur says he believed that his relapse into impious verse caused an illness that afflicted him a day or two later as he continued his march toward India. While encamped at Bigram just east of the Khybar pass he began coughing up blood, and commenting on this, he says he realized he was being punished for breaking his 1521 oath. After quoting the Quran to demonstrate the connection, he inserts one of his own Turkī poems to express pious regret for past literary immorality. However, as Bābur pointedly does not say he wrote the poem in 1525 he probably composed and inserted it when he was writing in the late 1520's and suffering badly from repeated illnesses. Indeed, the poem and the cloying religious rhetoric that follows are so atypical that both the poetry and prose are likely to represent the regrets of debilitated old age.

نی قیلایین سینینك بیله ای تیل　　جهتینکدین مینینك ایچیم قاندور
نیچه یخشی دیسانك بو هزل ایله شعر　　بیریسی فحش و بیری یالغان دور
کر دیسانك کویمایین بو جرم بیله　　جیلاونکنی بو عرصه دین یاندور

*

What shall I do with you o tongue,
Due to you my insides are bloody.
Even if you speak such joking verse well,
It is at once shameful and false.
If you speak and will not be tainted by this sin,
Turn your reins from this field.[112]

He follows the poem with more expressions of regret and thankfulness for God's counsel.

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[111] Ibid., fs. 252a-b. The translation of the last sentence of this passage is critical because the *Mubaiyin* is dated to 1521. Bābur must mean to say, therefore, that he had forgotten his earlier resolve, not that he had never had such ideas before.

[112] Ibid., f. 253a.

This ribald jest—followed by ex-post facto pious regret—also marks an end to Bābur's poetic development. Following his invasion of India he seems to have abandoned ambitious poetic composition. At least he is known to have written but one *ghazal* during the next five years. As *ghazal*s were the principal measure of a poet's stature the lack of these poems in either the *Vaqā'i'* or the *Rampur Dīwān* indicates that he turned his literary attentions elsewhere. In fact, based partly on the testimony of his daughter, Gulbadan Begim, he seems to have spent much of his leisure time between April 1526 and his death in December 1530 composing the *Vaqā'i'*, his great prose work that is justifiably the basis of his literary and political reputation. Apart from the *ghazal* and one *masnavī,* Bābur's poetic output in these years seems to have consisted entirely of occasional poems, fragments and quatrains. He explicitly intended these verses to be autobiographical, for in the postscript to the *Dīwān* he urges his readers to understand him through these verses: "Each time you read these words, reading them think of me." The Indian poems form the emotional counterpoint to Bābur's prose narrative of his Indian years. Through them he conveys with touching emotion the stark existential crises of loneliness, sickness and old age, a kind of psychological exile made all the more poignant by his separation from friends and homeland. Seen simply as verse the Indian poems constitute one of the most telling refutations of the oft-expressed conviction that pre-modern Islamic or Persianate verse has no distinguishable relationship to a poet's life.

Bābur's own conception of the relationship between his life and his verse may be partly discerned in the ways he thought about prose and poetry. Prose, on the evidence of his own writing and criticism of his son Humāyūn, was meant to be specific, describing a particular reality; it was not intended, as he sarcastically observes to Humāyūn, to be written like the poetic enigmas so beloved of Tīmūrid-era writers. Poetry, on the other hand offered, literally, a more harmonious version of that reality in the way that the Russian poet Alexander Blok conceived of the poet's task "...to free sounds from their natural anarchic element; to bring these sounds into harmony and give them form; to introduce this harmony into the outside world."[113] Often in the case of Bābur's more explicitly

[113] Roberta Reeder, *Anna Akhmatova* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 139.

occasional verses, such as those describing the effects of wine and *maʿjūn*, or his reaction to a specific event, the poems represented little more than this kind of artful vocal harmonizing. In other instances, though, Bābur's poems represented something far more ambitious, an abstraction of reality or, as has been said about Heian Japanese court poetry:

> The true significance of any literary work resides of course in the way it imposes order on our experience. By providing us with an illusion of our world and by giving this imaginative world an order that true experience lacks, poetry helps our lives take on an order, a beauty, and a significance they did not have.[114]

The relationship between poetry and Bābur's life, or poetry and his prose description of his life, seems to have been analogous to the relationship between his prose descriptions of natural beauty and his construction of formal, Persian-style gardens in Afghanistan and India. He accurately and vividly describes countryside of Kabul and the mountain slopes of Gulbahar and Istalif as they actually appeared—and appear today—as an idiosyncratic, unregulated natural landscape where wild tulips, rather than cultivated roses grew. Whereas the *Bāgh-i Vafā'*, the "Garden of Fidelity" he ordered built in 1508-09 east of Kabul, represented a generalized or abstracted version of nature, in fact a metaphor of eternity, a model of paradise, itself the Persian word for Iranian formal gardens.[115] While in the *Vaqā'iʿ* he describes the natural, unregulated beauty of Gulbahar or the particulars of the autumn foliage, in the Gulbahar *ghazal* he narrates an abstract tale of the generic lyrical hero and his beloved in the metaphorical, eternal poetic garden.

Bābur created the *Bāgh-i vafā'* out of nature's anarchy and the harmonious literary garden with its roses, cypress trees and archetypal beloveds, from the ungovernable particularities of an accurately rendered prose description of the Gulbahar *dāman*. The garden and his *ghazals* and *rubāʿī*s were art, the *Vaqā'iʿ* was not. Nearly dying in a snowstorm represented anarchic, chaotic life. Rendering that experience as part of a *ghazal* transmutted a particularized experience and prose description into a universalized form, the poetic art.

[114] Brower and Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, 461.
[115] See among many possible sources Mehdi Khansari, M. Reza Moghtader and Minouch Yavari, *The Persian Garden, Echoes of Paradise (*Washington D.C.: Mage, 1998).

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONQUEST OF HINDUSTAN

I'll make the kings of India ere I die
Offer their mines to sue for peace to me
And dig for treasure to appease my wrath.
Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, III, III.

After retreating from northern Afghanistan back to Kabul sometime in 1514, almost nothing is known of Bābur's life until five years later when his narrative resumes in January 1519 as he and his men begin an attack on the fortress of Bajaur, over a hundred miles east-north-east of Kabul. By his own evidence Bābur started 1519 still trying to pacify his petty Afghān kingdom, a "state" whose territories were then primarily concentrated along the section of the road that ran from northeast from Ghazni through Kabul and then east to the Khybar pass, extending perhaps to the banks of the Indus. His direct control of this modest region may have extended in 1519 fifty to sixty miles north of Kabul to the Hindu Kush passes, while he exercised a loose suzereignty over the Qunduz region in northeastern Afghanistan in the person of his cousin, Ways Mīrzā Mīrānshāhī. The richer plains of Balkh along the Amu Darya immediately west of Qunduz were in 1519 probably divided between the Uzbeks, the Safavids and to some degree Bābur himself.[1] East of Kabul his authority was restricted in some areas to no more than a few miles to the north and south of the road.

Yet, little more than a month after subduing Bajaur, Bābur crossed the Indus on a raid that led to the first, albeit temporary capture of Bherah, situated on the bank of the Jhelum river in the northwestern Panjab. The occupation of Bherah, an outlying dis-

[1] BN-M, f. 242a. The situation in Balkh province in 1519 is not very clear, perhaps because Bābur does not distinguish between the province and the city. Bābur alludes to the Uzbek threat to his supporter, Quch Beg, who governed the mountainous areas of Bamian and Ghur, west and northwest of Kabul. Yet the Safavids were also known to exert some control over Balkh from Harat.

trict of the wealthy Lahore province, apparently led Bābur to think seriously for the first time of taking Delhi, for according to his own testimony, after taking the town he sent a message to the newly enthroned ruler of Delhi, Sultān Ibrāhīm Lūdī, claiming the territories Tīmūr had conquered in 1398. By 1523 Bābur established his authority in Lahore, the capital of the Panjab, little more than a hundred miles southeast of Bherah, and in November 1525 he led an army out of Kabul that in April 1526 defeated Ibrāhīm and founded Tīmūrid rule in northern India. His conquest was an act of military imperialism legitimized by Tīmūr's brief invasion. It represented a dynastic conquest in the mold of the Ottomans and Uzbeks. Unlike the Safavid founder, Shāh Ismā'īl, Bābur was not an ideologue and did not enter India on a religious crusade. Having failed to restore his own rule and Tīmūrid fortunes in Samarqand, he invaded India for simple *mulkgīrliq* reasons, to ensure the power and prosperity of his paternal and maternal relations, the Mīrānshāhī Tīmūrids and the Chaghatay Chingīzids. Those practical political and material goals remained typical of the dynasty throughout most of its history, whatever the legitimizing affectations of later monarchs.[2]

The Occupation of the Panjab

From Bābur's description it is apparent that the attack on Bajaur in January 1519 was no simple *chapqun* or raid, although it may have been partly that, but a pacification campaign by which he directly extended his power in the region. This can be inferred from his remark that after the successful assault and massacre of more than three thousand Dilahzāk Afghān inhabitants of the fort, he sent heads of some of the captured and executed defenders as proof of his victory not only to Kabul but also north to Badakhshan, Qunduz and Balkh, perhaps to Ways Mīrzā in Badakhshan and Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā in Balkh.[3] His purpose in capturing the

[2] Bābur's attitude was typified by later Tīmūrid-Mughul policy in Bengal, which focused on revenue extraction and abstained from potentially explosive interference in local religious practice. See Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* 1240-1760 (California: University of California Press, 1993), 177-83.

[3] BN-M, f. 218b.

fort and slaughtering so many Bajauris also seems to have been designed as a pointed lesson to other Afghāns, for one of Bābur's new-found allies, the Yusūfzāī Afghān chief Shāh Mansūr who was present during these events, was sent back east to his Yūsufzai kin with "chastising orders." The Bajaur massacre seems to have had an immediate effect, for one of the competing rulers of Swat, Sultān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, offered his homage to Bābur a short time later, evidently hoping to exploit the new regional power to counter a rival Afghān chief.[4] Then following a typical post-battle interval of drinking, hunting and eating the local narcotic sweet *kamalī*, Bābur continued his campaign by marching due east into the Yūsufzai homeland in Swat to attack tribesmen who had not yet submitted to him. While in the vicinity he consolidated his territorial gains by marrying Shāh Mansur Yūsufzai's daughter. Bābur's alliance may have been strengthened with another Yūsufzai marriage to one of his men, for he mentions that shortly after his marriage Shāh Mansur's younger brother "brought his niece to this *yurt*," this "campsite."[5]

Bābur justified what he terms the "general killing" or massacre of the Dilahzāk Afghāns of Bajaur by claiming that they were not only "rebels" but had adopted "the customs of unbelievers."[6] By this he does not seem to mean that they imitated their Kāfirī neighbors, who never had been and as late as 1890 still were not Muslims.[7] Rather he reports that some thirty or forty years earlier some of the Dilahzāk Afghāns and the Yūsufzais had become heretics by joining a *darvīsh* or wandering ascetic or sufi by the name of Shāhbāz Qalandar. Having said this without elaborating on the nature of this man's "heresy," he reports that after the brief seige of Bajaur, while visiting a nearby hill for the view of the countryside, he happened on the tomb of the *qalandar* and had it destroyed, since the tomb of a heretic sufi was not a fitting monument for such a lovely spot, where he then sat and enjoyed some *maʿjūn*.

Heresy offended his aesthetic as well as his religious sensibilities,

[4] BN-M, f. 219a.
[5] Ibid., f. 220b.
[6] BN-M, f. 218a.
[7] For the Kāfirs see George Scott Robertson, *Kāfirs of the Hindu Kush* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1896), and Rudyard Kipling's fictional rendition in his short story *The Man Who Would be King.*

and like many religious men Bābur was more offended by heretics than by unbelievers. Yet he seems to have been more than just a little bit hypocritical when he invoked religion to justify the slaughter of so many Bajauri men—their captive women and children were soon released with the surviving male prisoners. From the time he arrived in Kabul Bābur treated Afghāns far more ruthlessly than he did his Turkic and Mongol enemies in Ferghanah. He regularly slaughtered Afghāns who either attacked or resisted him, memorializing his hostility with the minarets of skulls that dotted the countryside. When he describes the Bajauris as "ignorant, wretched people," for refusing his first demand to surrender their fort, he expresses himself with the same visceral contempt used to characterize other Afghāns, some of whom he later ridicules for their lack of knowledge of etiquette, as "rustic and stupid."[8]

The Dilahzāk Afghāns of Bajaur are also implicitly ridiculed when Bābur describes their contemptuous reaction to the firearms he and his men brought to this siege. This is the first time in his narrative Bābur mentions using guns. These *tufang* were evidently matchlocks whose use had spread rapidly east from the Ottoman-Iranian borderlands. Venetians sent firearms to northwestern Iran to the Turkic Aq Quyunlu enemies of the Ottomans in the late fifteenth century. They may have spread further east then—and perhaps with even greater speed following the Ottoman use of firearms when they shattered the Safavid army at the battle of Chaldiran in 1514.[9] Firearms had already been used in India in the Deccan and Gujarat, but Bābur's firearms advisor was Ustād ʿAlī Qulī, who by evidence of the subsequent narrative was seen as the expert in *Rumī* or Ottoman weapons and tactics, later in India advising on battle formations and building Bābur a powerful mortar.[10]

At Bajaur Ustād ʿAlī Qulī killed five men with his matchlocks and also twice used another weapon known simply as a *Farangī*,

[8] BN-M, 262b.

[9] John E. Woods mentions the Venetian dispatch of firearms to the Aq Quyunlu in his revised and expanded edition of Vladimir Minorsky's translation of the late fifteenth century chronicle of the Aq Quyunlu by Fazlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī (Isfahānī), *Tārīkh-i ʿĀlam-Ārā-yi Āmīnī* John E. Woods ed. with the abridged English translation by Vladimir Minorsky, *Persia in A.D. 1478-1490*, Annex II "The Aq Quyunlu and Firearms," and Postscriptum, 99-100.

[10] See Yar Muhammad Khan in "Bārūd," EI2, 1, 1068.

from "French" a word signifying in the Islamic world simply "European," but in this case very likely indicating a cannon of some kind. This may have been the same type of weapon Shāh Tahmasp, the Safavid Shāh of Iran, used in a 1528-29 battle that Persian sources identify as a *tūp-i Farangī* or "European cannon." The weapon Bābur used fired *Farangī tashī*, "Farangī stones," and Ustād ʿAlī used it in Bābur's campaigns in India, including the eastern Indian campaign in late spring 1529, when it sank some small boats.[11] In 1519 however, and even during the remainder of his life such weapons were still a novelty, as can be seen from Bābur's interest in commenting specially on their use. There is no evidence to show that either matchlocks or artillery were a crucial factor in any of his battles. At this stage in their development guns were probably more reliable for stationary targets—men on ramparts as at Bajaur or prisoners such as those he ordered Ustād ʿAlī Qulī and his matchlockmen to kill in March 1526 on the way to confront Ibrāhīm Lūdī.[12] In 1519 Bābur and his men still hunted with bows and arrows,[13] just as archers and cavalrymen still decided the fate of empires in Central Asia and northern India in the early sixteenth century.

After his Yūsufzai marriage, Bābur recalls that he and some of his men began thinking of crossing the Indus and riding further east to Bherah, located on the Jhelum river in the northwestern Panjab. His account of the decision to do so is presented in an elliptical way, mixing passive and active tenses that may reflect the confusion of motives at the time and his later impulse to present this as a coherent plan to invade India. Three factors that influenced Bābur's decision are obvious from his narrative and none of them involved systematic conquest at this time. These were first, that after Bajaur he badly needed supplies. Second, he had intended to raid across the Indus as early as 1505, and now had both motive and opportunity. Then, finally, the member of a ruling lineage near Bherah named Langar Khan provided the immediate catalyst by persuading Bābur to march. Nothing in the narrative indicates that

[11] BN-M, f. 371b. G. N. Pant in *Mughal Weapons in the Bābur-nāmā* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1989) suggests that the *Farangī* was some kind of swivel-gun. See Chapter 6, 149-81 for his discussion of firearms.

[12] BN-M, f. 263a.

[13] BN-M, f. 222b.

he initially crossed the Indus in 1519 as part of a definite plan to defeat the then Afghān rulers of Delhi and Agra.

Thus while Bābur begins discussing the Bherah expedition by writing "since coming to Kabul we had thought of a *yurush*, an Indian campaign..,"[14] in saying this he is probably alluding only to his plan in January 1505 to raid across the Indus, which he also describes as a *yurush*. It is obvious from his comments that the 1519 expedition to Bherah was initially like the one planned in 1505, no more than another raid for supplies. Bābur says precisely this in his narrative, remarking that after four months in and around Bajaur they had gotten virtually nothing, and he hoped to recoup the situation with a quick strike across the Indus. Later in the narrative he also indicates that the idea for the expedition to Bherah had not even been his, but that Langar Khan, whose maternal uncles ruled the hill country some fifteen miles north of Bherah, had been "the instigator and cause of these expeditions."[15] After taking Bherah, Bābur rewarded Langar Khan, or Langar Khan Niāzai with a Turco-Mongol yak tail standard, one more sign of the lingering influence of Mongol military traditions, even poorly understood ones, in late-Tīmūrid armies. Bābur also granted Langar Khan the nearby district of Khushab, which was quite likely this Afghān's goal in suggesting the expedition in the first place. He does not say when Langar Khan had joined him or suggested this expedition, but he may have come to Bābur when he heard about his conquest of Bajaur. If any further proof were needed about the ad hoc quality of the Bherah campaign, Bābur himself supplies it when he reports that when the idea of crossing the Indus was first raised, some of his men objected, saying they were unprepared. They reminded him that part of their forces remained in Kabul while other men garrisoned Bajaur, and still others had already left to ride back west to Lamghanat because they had no fodder for their horses. Yet his force still set off in mid-February, even though many of its horses were too emaciated to go further.[16]

However, just after recounting the reasons for this trans-Indus expedition Bābur unexpectedly remarks that he and his men now decided to assert sovereignty over Bherah and three other nearby

[14] BN-M, f. 222a.
[15] BN-M, f. 229b.
[16] BN-M, fs. 222a-b.

districts "long held by the Turks," in fact, continuously ruled since Tīmūr's invasion of 1398 by descendants of Tīmūr's appointed local rulers.[17] Perhaps Bābur did begin to entertain *mulkgīrliq* or imperialist ambitions as he rode down into the Panjab. At this point in his narrative he suddenly changes the terminology he uses to characterize this campaign. He ceases to refer to it as an Indian *chapqun* or *yurush*, a raid or expedition, and talks instead about the conquest of India. "Since there had always been an idea of *almaq—taking (seizing),*" India—Bābur writes again in passive tense before shifting to first person plural—"we thought of the territories of Bherah, Khushab and Chenab which had been possessions of the Turk, like our own territory."[18] Perhaps Bābur had thought of "taking" or "conquering" India years earlier, prompted by his seizure of Kabul and knowledge of Tīmūr's Indian campaign. It is an idea that would probably have occurred to any Tīmūrid confined to a petty, impoverished, unpacified territory in eastern Afghanistan. Seizing Bherah itself may well have occurred to Bābur as early as 1504, because one of the descendants of the Tīmūrid governors of the district visited Bābur in Kabul in late 1504 to "enter his service."[19] Given the many relatives who had a claim to rule Bherah in the early sixteenth century, it is possible that this man, Yār-Husayn, had invited Bābur to take the district on his behalf, just as Langar Khan may have done in 1519.[20]

Whatever the tricks of his memory, Bābur reports that he now began acting like a presumptive sovereign, and the first phase of the foundation of the Tīmūrid-Mughul empire of Delhi and Agra may be dated to the moment in 1519 when he decided to tax rather than pillage Bherah. As he and his men approached the town he sent messengers ahead, ordering that no *tālān u tārāj*, no sacking or plundering, should occur. His restraint was then made easier by the fact that the *arbāblar*, the dignitaries of the town came out to offer a present and their respects. After the massacre at Bajaur and his earlier history of slaughtering Afghāns, the peaceful occupation of Bherah was a startling change. It probably reflects not only his

[17] BN-M, fs. 223b & 224b.

[18] BN-M, f. 223b. The other two towns were located forty to fifty miles to the southwest and south of Bherah.

[19] BN-M, f. 145a.

[20] See fs. 224b-25a where Bābur discusses the Tīmūrid governors of Bherah.

newly articulated ambition but also the relative ease of subjugating the peasantry and merchants on the flat, alluvial Panjab plain, a geography and population that more nearly resembled Ferghanah than the mountainous terrain and fractious inhabitants of the Kabul region. Thus instead of plundering the inhabitants, on February 22, 1519 Bābur spoke with the dignitaries and *chaudhurīs*, or accountants of the district, and demanded that the people of Bherah should pay 400,000 *shāhrukhīs* as *māl-i amān*, essentially an indemnity or kind of protection money. Tīmūr himself used this term during his campaigns when promising to spare cities from being sacked.[21] Shībānī Khan had levied the same charge on Harat, or at least on some wealthy Harat citizens. Perhaps even the people of Bherah appreciated the distinction between having their town torn to pieces and this extortionate revenue demand made in late winter, months before the spring harvest. Not surprisingly, given the season, Bābur found it difficult to realize this sum, and had to assign four of his senior commanders to go about the districts collecting the money.

Bherah was a frontier district of the Afghān Lūdī state of Agra and Delhi, which Bābur now formally claimed; in 1504 Sikandar Lūdī's name had been read in the *khutbah*, the Friday prayer, in the town. While camping in the hills near Bherah to avoid the spring floods then just beginning to inundate the Panjab plains, Bābur sent a goshawk and message to the recently enthroned Sultān Ibrāhīm via his governor of Lahore, Daulat Khan. In it and presumably also in the accompanying oral instructions he mentions, Bābur demanded the provinces that had formerly "been dependent on the Turk."[22] By keeping his emissary at Lahore and sending him back after a few days without a reply, the Lūdīs inspired more of Bābur's oft-expressed contempt for Afghāns. Recalling these events and writing with the hindsight of his later victory over Ibrāhīm Lūdī, Bābur remarks that "the people and especially the Afghāns have astonishingly poor judgement; they are a people devoid of prudence and wisdom."[23] The Lūdīs, Bābur explains, neither mobilized to oppose him nor attempted to establish friendly relations, a

[21] See H. R. Roemer, "Tīmūr in Iran," CHI 6, p. 54.
[22] BN-M, f. 226b.
[23] BN-M, f. 226b.

comment that seems likely to have been part of Bābur's overall ex post facto justification for his later invasion and defeat of Ibrāhīm Lūdī at Panipat in April 1526.

The Lūdī state, the Sultanate of Delhi and Agra that Bābur now began claiming as a "Turk," that is as a Tīmūrid, was the north Indian kingdom founded in 1451 by Bahlūl Lūdī (r. 1451-89), a member of the lineage of the Afghān Khiljī confederation. Afghāns had been migrating to northwestern and northern India for at least four or five centuries before Bābur's arrival on the scene. Given the relative poverty of their homelands, they were naturally attracted by the agricultural and commercial wealth of the subcontinent and the possibility for employment in the armies of Indo-Muslim states.[24] Military employment gave them access to power and position, which allowed the Lūdīs and their allies to exploit the fragmented politics of northern and central India that were partly and most immediately the legacy of Tīmūr's destructive invasion and sack of Delhi in 1398. The Lūdīs first emerged as heirs of the shattered Sultanate of Delhi.

Bahlūl Lūdī's early campaigns were directed at establishing his authority within a hundred miles of his capital, but by the 1480's he had established a kind of suzereignty over a territory extending from the Panjab to Jaunpur in the central Gangetic valley. Ruling as a *primus inter pares* among his Afghān kin, Bahlūl Lūdī was evidently as popular as he was successful. Nonetheless, the state he founded was essentially a decentralized patchwork of family land grants or appanages, reminiscent of late Tīmūrid Mawarannahr. Still his third son Sikandar (r. 1489-1517) was able to emerge from the internecine struggles that followed his father's death and, after defeating his elder brother, the governor of Jaunpur, establish

[24] Apart from Bābur's eyewitness account, the next most valuable sources of information for Afghans are the late sixteenth century texts, the *Akbar nāmah* and *A'īn-i Akbarī*. Otherwise evidence for Afghan migrations and history from the tenth to the sixteenth century is based almost entirely upon either oral traditions/ linguistic evidence and Persian-language histories written in the seventeenth century or later. For two accessible modern accounts that utilize these materials see Rita Joshi, *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals* 1526-1707 (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985), and Awadh Bihari Pandey, *The First Afghan Empire in India* (1451-1526) (Calcutta: Bookland Ltd., c. 1956). For a discussion of Afghān involvement in Indian commercial, military and political affairs at a later period see Jos J. L. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire* c. 1710-1780 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

himself as Sultān of Delhi. He was successful in expanding the Lūdī kingdom as far as Bengal and, using Agra as a base, sought to extend his control to Gwaliar and Malwa in north-central India. His son, Ibrāhīm (r.1517-26), seems to have consciously sought to transform the Lūdī kingdom from an Afghān oligarchy to a centralized despotism, as was signaled by his treatment of his Afghān *amīrs* more as subjects than compatriots, declaring, it is said, that a "ruler ought to have no kin."[25] The resentment of his increasingly draconian rule led many Afghāns to rebel against his rule. It was one such prominent figure, Daulat Khan Yūsuf Khayl Lūdī, who was governor of Lahore when Bābur captured Bherah in 1519, who five years later in 1524 was to turn to Bābur for an alliance against Ibrāhīm in Delhi.

In March 1519, however, Bābur does not seem to have made any plans for another Indian campaign, much less a frontal attack on the Lūdī state. After appointing one of his Ferghanah officers, Hindu Beg Qauchin, to govern Bherah, Bābur and his men indulged in a typical post-combat series of wine and *maʿjūn* parties. These began on Saturday March 5th, a day after he received news of the birth of his third son Hind-al (the "taking of Hind"), named to commemorate the seizure of Bherah, using the same verb *almaq* he employed to characterize the Bherah campaign. If nothing else this naming foreshadowed the larger ambitions he had formulated by this time. Partying continued with brief interruptions for appointments to govern Bherah and Chenab.[26]

On Saturday morning he and his men set out for an "amusement" or "excursion." Taking a small boat they began drinking *araq*, some type of distilled liquor, although by late afternoon Bābur and his companions at one end of the boat had switched to *maʿjūn*. Drinking continued late into the evening when they finally returned to camp, two riders joking in a way that only seems really funny when intoxicated, "On a dark night we took turns carrying the jug."[27] The drinking continued into the early morning, marred by disputes between *araq* drinkers and those who preferred *maʿjūn*, the memory of which prompts Bābur to utter another truism, perhaps more *nasihat* or sage advice for his sons. By 1519 his two eldest sons,

[25] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i v Indii*, 104.
[26] Hind-al: al- from the verb *almaq*, to take, seize or conquer.
[27] BN-M, f. 227b.

Humāyūn and Kāmrān, sometimes attended these gatherings.[28] Bābur writes: "A *maʿjūn subatï*, (a *maʿjūn* gathering) never goes well with an *araq* and *chair subatï* (an *araq* or wine gathering)."[29] Eventually the party became "disgusting" and dissolved into an undisciplined uproar.

A similar "gathering" took place the following Thursday, March 10th, after which Bābur says that he rode back into camp so drunk that he remembered nothing except that he vomited at his tent. His men told him, reports Bābur, that he galloped into the camp carrying a torch. This incident is faithfully reproduced in a miniature painting done for the Persian translation of the *Vaqāʾiʿ* in the atelier that Bābur's grandson, Akbar, established.[30] The painter's choice of this scene, one of a fairly limited number chosen from the myriad of possibilities in the text, raises a number of probably unanswerable questions about late sixteenth century Tīmūrid court culture and the relationship of art to a text that was revered by Bābur's descendants. If it is true, as is commonly believed about the Tīmūrid-Mughul court, that "The emperor's tastes and wishes determined all artistic production and the monarch-patron imposed his views and favorite subjects on artists...," then it has to be assumed that Bābur's grandson, Akbar, personally approved the inclusion of this scene.[31] Still, it is impossible to say whether its inclusion reflects Akbar's sense of humor or stems from more complex and subtle motives.

Miniature painters commonly depict drunken revelers—as when the Harat artist Bihzād painted scenes of dissolute indulgence in Husayn Bayqara's court—and on occasion rulers were even known publicly to exhibit a sense of humor—as the Safavid Shāh Tahmasp does in his own painting of members of his household staff.[32] Still, it is rare, not to say unheard of, for descendants of rulers to indulge

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[28] BN-M, f. 247a.

[29] Ibid., f. 227b.

[30] British Library, Oriental Ms. 3714 [c. 1590] f. 314r.

[31] Amina Okada, *Indian Mughal Miniatures of the Mughal Court* Deke Dusinberre trans. (New York, N.Y.: Henry Abrams, 1992), 15.

[32] For alcohol and drinking see Bihzād's paintings in Bahari's work, *Bihzād*, "A Celebration at the Court of Sultan Husayn Mirza," 102-03. Stuart Cary Welch discusses Shāh Tahmasp's artistic sense of humor in *A King's Book of Kings*, *The Shah Nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), p. 61, figure 14.

in humor at the expense of their revered ancestors. At least the portrayal of Bābur's drunken return to camp suggests that Akbar at least appreciated the humanity of his grandfather, during the period in which Akbar's court chronicler, Abū'l Fazl, had already begun the process of transforming the human Bābur of the *Vaqā'i'* into the proto-Alexander of his hagiographic history the *Akbar nāmah*.

After describing two more days of drinking Bābur remarks that the hot season was about to begin, a comment evidently meant to explain why he and his men left Bherah on March 13th to return to Kabul. As he and his men marched toward the Indus they defeated one group of Afghāns whose leader had become, according to their enemies, an "evil man" and a highway robber.[33] Bābur's description makes this attack sound like the kind of pacification in which local lineages used him to settle historic enmities, a recurring feature of outside interference in Afghān politics. As he approached and crossed the Indus he left behind him a narrow swath of territory ruled by his appointees or newly subdued local lineages who represented resurgent Tīmūrid power in the Panjab. Yet, the fragility of his power was quickly demonstrated, for as soon as Bābur left the area the Afghāns and other landholders in and around Bherah threw off their enforced allegiance and expelled Bābur's governor of Bherah, Hindu Beg.[34] This news reached him about three weeks after he arrived in Kabul at the end of March, where he was greeted by his sons Humāyūn and Kāmrān, and immediately began another drinking party that lasted until April 6th, when his longtime Andijan warrior companion Dūst Beg, died of a fever.

Between Empires: Intoxication and Pacification

After interrupting his narrative with an account of Dūst Beg's heroic deeds—in battles with Sultān Ahmad Tambal, the Uzbeks before Tashkent, Mongol "rebels" in Kabul and most recently the victory at Bajaur—Bābur's history of the next six months is largely

[33] BN-M, f. 229b.
[34] BN-M, f. 235b.

given over to descriptions of drinking parties and punitive raids against nearby Afghān lineages. He does not even allude to the Lūdīs during his account of the remainder of events of 1519, so it seems unlikely he was preoccupied with plans for the conquest of India during this time. In any event, with the Afghān resurgence at Bherah he had lost his principal base in the Panjab, as well as a valuable source of revenue, although he seems to have retained control over a trans-Indus district known as Qarluq.[35] Still he is likely to have come away from the Bherah expedition not only with a now fully conscious ambition to establish Tīmūrid rule in the Panjab but also with a realistic sense of the weakness of Lūdī authority in the western Panjab and an appreciation for the agricultural wealth of the Panjab plains, where he had probably raised more revenue in a few weeks than he could extort from Afghāns in several years or more. As he indicates in subsequent comments, this was wealth worth fighting for.

These 1519 pages have the quality of a diary, in which the entries list dates and briefly summarize events in quick succession, often with little comment or explanation. Thus after describing Dūst Beg's heroics he mentions that on 13 May 1519 Sultānïm Begim, Husayn Mīrzā Bayqara's eldest daughter, arrived to take up residence in Kabul—one of many signs that Bābur's state, however modest, had become a haven for Tīmūrid refugees. The next entry is 18 April when Bābur says he pardoned one Bābā Shaykh, one of those who rebelled against him in Ghaznī in 1516.[36] Two days later Bābur mentions that he and companions rode out of Kabul for the spring of Khwajah Sih-Yaran near Istalif, north of Kabul, but stopped first at a *qāzī*'s house in Bihzad, a cleric who objected to their plans for a drinking party in his home. On the 21st of April they reached the spring, where Bābur had constructed a garden when he first arrived in Kabul. Three days later, after planting saplings around the spring they held a drinking party. According to his entry for the next day, April 25th, they rode back to Kabul quite drunk. On April 26th, he notes, Hindu Beg, his recently

[35] Bābur mentions receiving submission of the chieftains of Qarluq on his return to Kabul from Bhera. Qarluq was a district between the Indus and Bherah given to Humāyūn but governed by Muhammad ʿAli Jang Jang. BN-M, f. 231a-b & 238a.

[36] TR-T, fs. 203b-204a.

appointed governor of Bherah, arrived to announce that the inhabitants had rebelled and forced him to abandon the town as soon as Bābur had left. Then on April 30th, Bābur reports, he came down with a severe fever, which may explain why he records no more events until May 15th

Bābur's abbreviated entries convey something of the rhythm of his life at this period, and his descriptions of punitive and raiding expeditions sent out against different Afghān tribes or clans also serve as reminders of the difficulties of pacifying Afghanistan and using it is as an economic and political base. In contrast to Bherah, where peasants were undoubtedly used to paying tribute or taxes to the paramount power in the Panjab, many and perhaps most Afghāns never willingly conceded Bābur's authority, or that of his descendants. When looking back at this period from the perspective of his Indian conquest, Bābur discusses his problems with the perennially troublesome Bangash Afghāns in the Kabul gazetteer. His account reminds readers of his earlier dismissal of Andijan's importance when the prize of Samarqand seemed within reach. Bābur says of this mountainous region due south of the Jalalabad-Khybar road.

> Bangash is another *tuman* [of Kabul]. The area round about is full of Afghān highway robbers such as the Khūgiānī, Khirilchī, Tūrī and Landar. Since it is isolated they do not pay the desired revenue. As greater tasks such as the conquest of Qandahar, Balkh, Badakhshan and Hindustan occupied me, there has been no opportunity to subjugate Bangash.[37]

In fact, neither Bābur's Tīmūrid-Mughul descendants nor any later South Asian, Afghān or European power managed to subdue Bangash either.

Bābur's perennial problems with Afghāns may have been one of the reasons why he forcibly resettled pastoral nomads from northern Afghanistan in the Kabul region, that is to provide a supply of mounts and food for his men. Some of these *Turk ve Aymaq*, Turkic and Mongol tribes, had been brought to Kabul fifteen years earlier, and sometime before 1519 more *Aymaq*s had been forced or persuaded to settle there. The lack of pasturage, however, made them restless and they were finally given permission to return north of

[37] BN-M, f. 139b. See also f. 132a, where Bābur mentions the Khirilchī robbers—and distinguishes them from Afghāns.

the mountains to Qunduz and neighboring regions.[38] Having allowed them to return in July, Bābur resumed his pacification campaigns with an attack on the ʿAbd al-Rahman Afghāns of Gardez, about sixty miles due south of Kabul and forty-five miles east of Ghaznī, in fact almost due west of Bangash. His account exemplifies the effort, expense and long-term consequences of such punitive raids and explains why in most instances an ambitious Tīmūrid simply couldn't be bothered to pacify these regions. Using *chapquncï* to describe his "raiders" and both *chapqun* and *yurush* to characterize this expedition, Bābur writes that these Afghāns were

> "poorly behaved and remiss in their tribute. Passing caravans were injured by them. On Wednesday the 29th of Rajab [28 July 1519] a raid against the Afghāns was begun. Dismounting at the Waghchan defile, we ate and mounted shortly after mid-day prayer. At night we lost the road and became very disoriented in the hill country southeast of Panjab-i Shahnah. After a time we came on to the road [and] crossing the Chasm-i turah pass in the direction of Gardez [and] an attack was launched from the summit to the plain at the [time of] morning prayer. One group raided toward Karmash mountain, which is southwest of Gardez. Leading the right wing Khusrau Mīrzā Qulī and Sayyid ʿAlī were sent in behind those raiders. Most of the army raided straight up the valley to the east of Gardez with the rear led by Sayyid Qāsim, Lord of the Gate, Mīr Shāh Qauchin, Hindu Beg, Qutluq-Qadam and Husayn. As most of the army was raiding up the valley I rode after them.
>
> There were men far up in the valley. The horses of the contingent that went up the valley pulled up so these men gained nothing. Having seen forty or fifty Afghāns on foot the army's rear guard set off in their direction [and] sent a messenger to me. I too rode quickly. As I came up Husayn Hasan impetuously and foolishly charged off alone. Getting amidst the Afghāns he used the sword. Then they shot his horse. As he stood up they shot at his legs [and] attacked with knives from all sides, and cut him to pieces. The warriors stood by and failed to help.
>
> Hearing this news the leading i*chki beg*s, Gadāʾī Taghaʾï, Pāyindah Muhammad Quplan, Abūʾl Hasan Qurchi and Muʾmin Atekeh and the *yigitler* were sent galloping forward. I myself hurriedly followed. Before anyone else Muʾmin Atekeh struck an Afghān with his sword, beheading him. Abūʾl Hasan Qurchi also went bravely forward without armor, dividing the Afghāns, pushing his horse ahead, struck an Afghān and beheaded him. He himself received three wounds. His

[38] BN-M, f. 237b.

> horse received a wound. Pāyindah Muhammad Quplan also rode bravely forward, struck an Afghān and took his head. Although the bravery of Abū'l Hasan Muhammad and Pāyindah Muhammad Quplan had been evident earlier, it was even more apparent in the work of this *yurush*. By arrow or sword about forty or fifty Afghāns were cut to pieces. After killing these Afghāns we dismounted in a meadow where the heads of these Afghāns were piled into a minaret
>
> Those *beg*s who had ridden with Husayn arrived. Enraged and contemptuous I said: 'How could so many men look on while a few Afghāns on foot on an absolutely level plain seize such a warrior (*yigit*). You should be cashiered, driven from [your] *parganah*s and districts, your beards cut, paraded in towns like criminals. Anyone who stands quietly by not lifting a hand while such a warrior is assaulted on level ground will suffer retribution.'[39]

Bābur remembered that after reproaching his men—whom he did cashier after he returned to Kabul on July 31st—some others returned from successfully stealing some sheep and other plunder from nearby villages. Starting back for Kabul the next day he ordered a few of his men to get, evidently to *buy* pheasants from people along the way while he and others went sight-seeing to the Rustam plain where he saw the *pushkāl*, the monsoon clouds piled up on the eastern-southeastern side of the mountains.[40] His allusion to the monsoons is an evocative reference to the transition he was now making in 1519 from a Central Asian to a South Asian ruler. He may have thought to mention seeing the dramatic monsoon clouds in 1519 because when he was writing this passage in 1527 or 1528 as a ruler in Agra, he would have well understood the significance of the monsoon—for climate, campaigns and perhaps most of all because of his own sharply deteriorating health.

The course of this sloppy but bloody little raid offers another another reminder of the realities of "pacification" and state building in Afghanistan, lessons that Bābur's descendants, not to speak

[39] BN-M, fs. 238a-239a.

[40] BN-M, f. 239b. *Pushkāl* is a Hindi word for the rainy season, whose approach is normally manifested in June or July by the massive build up of rain-laden cumulus clouds sweeping off the Arabian Sea. The clouds arrive in the northeastern Afghan region in June or July from the east after striking the Himalayas. The early British envoy to Kabul, Mounstuart Elphinstone, describes the extent to which the monsoons affected the eastern Afghan region in his report, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and Its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India*, 130-31. A scientific report on the Afghan monsoons is available in Lennart Edelberg and Schuyler Jones, *Nuristan* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1979), 25-28.

of British and Soviet armies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, learned to their cost. By slaughtering Afghāns in Gardez and stealing their sheep and goods Bābur may have briefly cowed but also certainly enraged Afghān clans in the area. Raids on caravans may have stopped for a time, but Bābur doesn't claim he achieved this goal, and since he left no detachments behind to enforce his will in this area so close to Kabul, the long-term effect of this raid was probably negligible. Trying to subdue eastern Afghanistan with the few thousand men under his command was a Sisyphean task, with almost yearly raids necessary to enforce his will in the absence of more troops who could garrison the innumerable narrow valleys on either side of the Kabul-Ghazni road. The British found it no easier four and a half centuries later with more troops and resources at their command. If Bābur had developed a systematic plan for periodic punitive raids, he neither mentions it nor gives implicit evidence of such a coherent but probably impossibly demanding and expensive scheme. Most raids seem to have been ad hoc decisions, sometimes to repress Afghān attacks, sometimes to steal food, often a combination of both motives. As Bābur suggests from his early comments about the Kabul region, he knew that this area could not be a viable basis for an empire. That had to be resuscitated in the plains and cities of Mawarannahr or in the extraordinarily wealthy South Asian fertile crescent that stretched in an arc from the lower Indus northeast to the Panjab and then southeast down the Ganges valley.

Bābur's narrative of events from 31st of July until the 24th of January 1520, when his text once again breaks off, this time for five years until January 1525, represents an autobiographical continuation of the earlier part of the year. It is a diary-like narrative of pleasure outings interrupted or combined with punitive raids and/or foraging expeditions against various Afghān tribes. Bābur had failed to intimidate most Afghāns, apart from the Dilahzāks, some of whom Bābur had terrorized into cooperation following his earlier attack and massacre at Bajaur. So after a series of wine and *ma'jūn* parties in August, Bābur set off eastwards at the urging of his new Dilahzāk allies on September 8th to attack the Yūsufzais at the confluence of the Swat and Kabul rivers just east of the Khybar pass. As was true of so may of these punitive and plundering raids this one ended inconclusively. In fact it even began badly, when Bābur dislocated his thumb as he angrily struck his groom for the

careless way in which he brought Bābur's horse.[41] He evidently reports this incident because, as he writes later, it left him unable to write for a month, not because he was embarrassed for losing his temper.[42] Then as his small force approached the Khybar the Yūsufzais, warned of his approach, fled, leaving behind less than one-quarter of the grain his Dilahzāk allies had said he would find there.[43]

By now it was early October and having failed to gain much from the Yūsufzais, Bābur consulted with his *beg*s. They decided to raid the nearby Afrīdī Afghāns and to provision Peshawar just east of the Khybar with the animals and grain they seized, perhaps thinking of using Peshawar fort as a staging base for future raids into India. However, before he and his men could act on this plan a messenger arrived with news from Badakhshan that the province had been invaded by the Chaghatay Mongol ruler of Mughulistan and the Altï Shahr country, Haydar Mīrzā's uncle, Sultān Saʿīd Khan.[44] This was the Mongol kinsman whose service Haydar Mīrzā had joined after leaving Bābur in Hisar in 1512. After another conference Bābur and his men decided to abandon the idea of provisioning Peshawar, return to Kabul and march north to Badakhshan. They evidently made the decision with the idea of reinforcing his cousin, Ways Mīrzā, who was then fighting to hold his territory between the Uzbeks to the west and north and the Mongols in Kashgar and the Altï Shahr to the east.[45]

After marching back though the Khybar, though, Bābur decided that while waiting for more news from Badakhshan he would raid the Khizr-Khel Afghāns, who had been harassing his troops and stealing their horses. Moving into the nearby hills he and his men captured mainly animals and small children, but enough evidently to prompt the nearby Wazīrī Afghāns, who, Bābur remarks, had

[41] BN-M, f. 242a.

[42] BN-M, f. 245a.

[43] BN-M, f. 243a.

[44] BN-M, f. 244a. On the basis of Bābur's report the invasion must have occurred nearly a year earlier. By the time Bābur received the news the Khan was evidently back in Kashgar. Ibid., 246a. It was as an agent of the Saʿīd Khan that Haydar Mīrzā later invaded Kashmir in 1531, a territory he reoccupied permanently in 1540 following Humāyūn's defeat.

[45] Haydar Mīrzā, who was in Central Asia at this time provides details of the events surrounding Sultan Saʿīd Khan's invasion, and indicates it was not so much a full scale invasion as a boundary dispute. TR-T, fs. 202a-203a.

never before given satisfactory *pīshkish* or tribute, to now offer 300 sheep. This raid also persuaded some chieftains of the Khiljī and Samū Khel tribes to submit to Bābur, who by now, October 9, 1519, was once again able to write. "We pardoned their offenses," Bābur reports, [and] " a levy of four thousand sheep was fixed, the "great men" were robed, collectors were appointed [and] sent out."[46] Despite the typically ad hoc quality of this expedition Bābur had succeeded in marginally extending his authority, although from both the Wazīrī and the Khiljī he was still collecting *māl*, property or in this case flocks, as *pīshkish* or tribute rather than *kharaj*, a term he consistently uses elsewhere to indicate land revenue or other regular taxes. It is extremely rare for him to mention that he demanded or collected actual coin from Afghāns. An exception occurred in late December 1519 when he reports collecting sixty *altūn*s or gold coins from a *Tājīk* village in Nijrao district, northeast of Kabul just below Kafiristan.[47] However, these villagers must have been merchants to have possessed such wealth in hard currency.

Concern for Badakhshan now disappears from the narrative, probably because Bābur had learned that Sultān Saʿīd Khan had withdrawn after asserting Mongol border claims on the Badakhshan frontiers with Kashgar. Instead, Bābur devotes the remainder of his account of the year 1519 to recollections of what he remembered most fondly about Kabul, "gatherings" in the gardens and mountain valleys with his companions. Thus immediately after settling with the Khiljī, he and his men rode to the garden he had constructed in 1508-09 at Adinahpur, about seventy miles due east of Kabul.[48] Bābur's engaging description of their sojourn of three or four days in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'* garden is one of innumerable testimonials to his appreciation of the beauty of nature, here of

[46] BN-M, f. 245a. Bābur does not use the term "*khilat*" here, although he evidently is describing the common practice of ceremonial robing.

[47] BN-M, fs. 248b-249a.

[48] Bābur says Adinahpur was located some 13 *yigach* east of Kabul. The *yigach* is an imprecise measurement equal to somewhere between four to eight miles. The road from Kabul twists and turns on its way east so the actual distance may be closer to somewhere between eighty to ninety miles. Bābur says that the road was so bad it was impossible to cover the distance in a day, whereas one could leave Kabul in the morning and arrive in Ghazni in the afternoon, although it was 14 *yigach* distant. BN-M, f. 137b. For a careful discussion of various measures see BN-A, 667-68.

course nature carefully contrived. His account also documents the practical use of these gardens as sources of food and beyond that as experimental agricultural stations, a tradition of scientific garden cultivation in the Perso-Islamic world that was already well-established before Bābur's time in a number of sources, such as treatise of the polymath minister of the Ilkhanid Mongols of Iran, Rashīd al-Dīn.[49]

"It was one of the *Bāgh-i Vafā*'s beautiful seasons," Bābur writes:

> The lawns were covered in clover. The sear leaves of pomegranate trees were intensely yellow. The pomegranates on the trees were bright red. The orange trees were green and fresh with innumerable oranges on the trees, but the oranges were less ripe than was desired. These pomegranates were good, but not as good as those of our homelands [*vilāyatlar*]. On this occasion we were well-contented with the Bāgh-i Vafā'.
>
> On Monday [October 17th] we left the garden. I remained there until first watch [9 a.m.] [and] distributed some oranges. The oranges of two trees were presented to Shāh Hasan. Some *beg*s received the oranges of one tree; some others [divided] the oranges of one tree [between them]. As there was a thought of visiting Lamghan in the winter I ordered about twenty orange trees around the pool to be held in reserve.[50]

In the spring of 1524 Bābur brought bananas and sugar cane from India to be planted in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'*, and later sent some of the sugar cane on to Badakhshan, probably to Humāyūn who was then governing the province.[51]

Several drinking parties were held during the next two days as Bābur and his men made their way back to Kabul. One of his men, Dūst Muhammad Bāqir, became so drunk on the evening of the 19th that he couldn't mount his horse, even after water was thrown in his face. Just at that time Afghān raiders appeared, and another of Bābur's men jokingly suggested that rather than leaving Dūst Muhammad there, they should cut off his head and carry that back

[49] See A. K. S. Lambton, "The Āthār wa ahyā of Rashīd al-Dīn Fadl Allah Hamdānī and His Contribution as an Agronomist, Aboriculturalist and Horticulturalist," in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan ed., *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 126-54.

[50] BN-M, fs. 245a-b. By early January the oranges in the Bāgh-i Vafā' in Adinahpur's subcontinental climate were ripe. BN-M., f. 249b.

[51] BN-M, fs. 132a-b.

with them![52] Finally the entire drunken contingent mounted and arrived safely back in Kabul where in the following days a certain amount of state business was conducted—the reception of envoys and ceremonial robing and honorable dismissal of Nūhānī or Lūhārnī Afghān merchants—before spending much of the next month drinking.

Reading about these "gatherings' or "entertainments" not only humanizes Bābur and his men, but also acts as a reminder that they represented a kind of social ideal for Bābur after he arrived in India. The prominence he gives to them in his narrative for 1519 and early 1520 probably reflects in part at least the powerful nostalgia he felt for his social life in Kabul as he struggled in the enervating Indian climate to subdue the panoply of Muslim and Hindu rulers he encountered in northern India. His desire to be buried in Kabul reflects his memory of this period equally as well as his narrative and poetry. These sessions also convey the sense of the later Kabul years as a pre-imperial interregnum in which comradeship was still largely the norm in his relatively unstructured social milieu that stands in stark, and quite delightful contrast to the highly structured court environment of his great-great-grandson Shāh Jahān, the builder of the Tāj Mahal.

The sense of this period as a kind of Prince Hal-Falstaff phase of Bābur's life is conveyed most completely in one of the longest single passages in which he describes one of these "entertainments." It began on November 14, 1519.

> On Saturday the eighteenth of the month I saddled [and rode out] from the Chahār Bāgh at midnight. I sent the royal guard and the groom back. Crossing Mullā Bābā's bridge I went out by the Diurin narrows [and] going along the kārīz [irrigation channel] of Qushnadur and the bāzārs, behind the bear-house, I arrived at Tardi Beg Khāksār's house before morning. Learning [of my arrival] Tardi Beg nervously came running out. His petty stinginess was notorious. I had taken 100 *shāhrukhī*s with me. I gave[them] to Tardi Beg. I said that he should assemble wine and utensils [as] I fancied having a private and dissolute gathering. Tardi Beg went off toward Bihzad for wine. I gave my horse to one of Tardi Beg's slaves [and] sat myself down on the embankment alongside the kārīz. It was the first watch when Tardi Beg brought a jug of wine. We both set about drinking. Muhammad Qāsim Barlas and Shāhzādah, learning that Tardi Beg

[52] BN-M, f. 246a.

> brought wine, followed Tardi Beg on foot, quite unaware of me. We invited [them] to the gathering. Tardi Beg said that 'Hulhul Anigah wishes to drink wine with you.' I said, 'As for me I have never seen a woman drink; please invite her to the gathering!' We also invited a *qalandar* called Shāhī and one of the kārīz men who played the rubāb [rebeck]. Sitting on a hill behind the kārīz there was drinking until the [time of] the evening prayer. Then after going to Tardi Beg's house, I drank by candlelight until about the [time of] the bed-time prayer. It was a friendly sort of gathering.[53] I lay down. The others went off to another house till about the time of the *naqārah*. Hulhul Anigah came [and] made offensive requests. By feigning drunkenness I finally escaped [her].[54]

If Bābur really had never seen a woman drink wine before it is a measure of how Tīmūrid society had evolved to become more sedentarized and Islamized than that of Tīmūr himself. When the ambassador from Castile, Clavijo, visited Tīmūr in Samarqand in 1405 he was frequently called to drink and sometimes to drink with Tīmūr's wives. As Clavijo describes one occasion on October 9th, 1405:

> Khanzādeh, the wife of Mīrān Shāh, Tīmūr's eldest [surviving] son, made a great feast and we were both invited thereto. As we approached her pavilion we noticed that here and there on the ground were set many jars of wine, and of this we all partook later abundantly.... we noticed that Khanzādah herself was a princess now some forty years of age: she was of fair complexion and fat. At the feast on the ground before her were set many of those jars of wine already mentioned.... Present sitting near the Princess were many relatives of her highness, and some lords were in attendance, also there were standing in the tent ballad singers who played to their singing an accompaniment on musical instruments. As we came up and were presented the Princess and the company were already drinking wine....[55]

Bābur's outing, now without Hul Hul Anigah, who disappears from the narrative as suddenly as she appears, evolved into a moveable feast. First, Bābur, Tardi Beg and Shāhzādah rode further north to Istalif and Istarghij, two villages about six miles apart in the Kuh-i Daman valley, about thirty-three miles north-northwest of Ka-

[53] The phrase here is: طوربغيل وغيش صحبتى .
[54] BN-M, fs. 247a-b.
[55] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 244-5.

bul.[56] The climate of this alpine region was so pleasant and the villages themselves were so beautifully situated and endowed with orchards and vineyards that Bābur's Tīmūrid uncle, Ulugh Beg Kābulī, referred to them as his "Khurasan and Samarqand,"[57] a kind of Tīmūrid kingdom in miniature. Bābur had evidently visited these two villages soon after he arrived in Kabul, as his detailed description of the gardens he modified or built is included in the Kabul gazetteer section of the text. Bābur's lovingly detailed picture of Istalif represents the kind of natural landscape against which he measured Indian topography later in the text. Still, it was nature that needed to be formalized or regulated for maximum aesthetic pleasure, a scene recorded in one of the miniatures that illustrate Akbar's Persian translation of the *Vaqā'i'*. After describing the grapes and fruits that grew all along the *dāman* the "piedmont" or slopes of the Pamghan range, he writes:

> Few places are known to have a village like Istalif. There are orchards on both sides of the great river flowing through the village [and] small, verdant pleasure gardens. The water is cold; ice is not needed. It is generally pure. In this village is the garden known as *Bāgh-i Kalān* (the Great Garden) that Ulugh Beg Mīrzā took by force. Having given its value to its owners I took it. Outside the garden are plane trees. The area beneath the trees is green, shady and pleasant. Flowing constantly in the midst of the garden is a one-mill stream. Along the edge of this *arïq* there are plane trees and other varieties of trees. Previously this stream ran in a *bīsiyāq*, (an "irregular" or "disorderly") fashion. I ordered the *arïq* to be made straight and regular. It has become a very fine place.[58]

Within this discussion of the aesthetics of landscape architecture Bābur has left another autobiographical signpost for his readers when he mentions that whereas his uncle, Ulugh Beg Kabulī, had seized this land he, Bābur, compensated the owners. Contemporaries would have immediately understood the significance of this remark, that Bābur was showing himself to be a Muslim ruler who

[56] This area is described with photographs by Albert Szabo and Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan, an Atlas of Indigenous Domestic Architecture* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1991), 197-215.

[57] BN-M, f. 136b.

[58] BN-M, f. 136b. Along with *siyaq,* the other word Bābur uses for "straight," *rajah,* is found in the common Persian sentence: *yek-rajah dirakht nishāndan,* "to plant trees in a straight line."

recognized the sanctity of private property. His offhand, unexplained comment is another indication of the degree to which Tīmūrid society had evolved. In taking this land Ulugh Beg had acted very much like Tīmūr himself when once he drove a new street through a residential district of Samarqand. Certain sayyids, his chess-playing companions perhaps, complained to Tīmūr on behalf of the property owners, and "It is reported that on hearing this Timur waxed wrathful declaring that all the land of the city of Samarqand was his private property, for he had bought the same with his own money, further that he had the title deeds in his possession.... He spoke this with such command of his rights that those sayyids were completely abashed. They were now but too thankful the order had not been given for them all to lose their heads."[59] Publicly at least, Bābur would never have exhibited such behavior.

Having further legitimized his status in Kabul by demonstrating his own ʿ*adālat* or just behavior to the residents of Istalif, Bābur also mentions his preference for having nature ordered into geometrical patterns at a spring below Istalif and Istarghij, where he had the spring enclosed in a *siyāqlïq ve gunyālïq*, a "regular symmetrical" stone pool overlooking a grove of *arghwān* or Judas trees. In this case too the garden was evidently designed before 1519, as it follows Bābur's description of the *Bāgh-i Kalān* in the Kabul gazetteer. He recalls his aesthetic delight in geometrically ordered nature once again when describing trees in the *Pādshāh-i Bāgh*, the royal or imperial garden near Istarghij in 1519. There he saw an apple tree whose branches all had five or six equally spaced leaves, whose regularity rivaled the painter's art.[60] Here was nature apparently imitating art, the art of Persian miniature painting with its symmetrically ordered space and unnaturally regular trees.[61] Yet this artistic preference for a mathematically arranged nature itself reflected the precisely ordered Persian-style gardens Bābur knew from his youth in Ferghanah, although no landscape gardeners

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[59] Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 279-80.

[60] BN-M, f. 248a.

[61] See Eleanor Sims discussion of the geometry of Tīmūrid painting in her article, "Painting in Timurid Iran," *Asian Art* 2, 2 (Spring 1989), 62-79. See also below, Chapter 7 and Epilogue, for a discussion of the significance of geometry in Bābur's life.

there are known to have bred geometrically symmetrical plants.

Before Bābur's text breaks off once again on January 24, 1520 for nearly six years, the remainder of his narrative for December, 1519 and January 1520 is largely given over to a day by day summary of pleasure outings in Kabul and then, in early January 1520, in the warm regions around Adinahpur, where Bābur and his companions once more stayed in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'*, this time for nearly a week. By then the oranges were ripe and the garden lush with greenery, probably owing to the monsoon rains whose clouds he had seen in July. Just after mentioning this visit Bābur reports with typical disarming candor that because he had "formed the intention" of *tā'ib* or "returning to God," that is renouncing drink, in his fortieth year, he was now drinking even more as there was only a year left![62]

As if to make his point he notes in his next entry, for Sunday, January 7, 1520, that "He took a *sabūhī*," or 'dawn-draught,' employing the same phrase he repeatedly uses for what seems to have been a frequent morning drinking ritual.[63] Afterwards he "sobered up" and then "chose" *ma'jūn*. On Wednesday, still in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'* Bābur writes that "Having taken the dawn-draught it was jokingly said if any one recites like a Sart [an Iranian or Persian speaker] he must drink a cup. As a result many people drank.... [Then] it was said if any person recites like a Turk he must drink an *ayāgh*. This time also many people drank a cup."[64] As the sun rose everyone retreated to the edge of the pool and drank in the shade of the orange trees. The charming idiocy of this scene has a timeless ring of truth in its depiction of silly male drinking bouts, especially those seen in military cultures the world over.

During the next ten days Bābur and his men enjoyed more

[62] BN-M, f. 249b.

[63] For *sabūhī* see Dihkhuda, 32, 136-37. The *sabūhī*, or morning drink of wine was known in pre-Islamic times among both Arabs and Iranians. For the Arab tradition see Abdulla el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," in A. F. L. Beeston et al ed., *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 44, 81-83 and in the Iranian case Ahmad Saidi ed. and trans., *Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*, 57 & 237. The "morning draught" is frequently mentioned in Persian poetry, as in some *ghazal*s of Hāfiz.

[64] BN-M, f. 249b. Bābur is apparently referring to reciting or chanting poetry. The *ayāgh* or cup is likely to have been the shallow porcelain drinking cup still commonly used in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan etc. which is seen in the miniature paintings from this period.

drinking sessions at homes, gardens or on rafts in the countryside near Adinahpur as they moved from Kunar northeast of the town to ʿAlishang in the mountains to the northwest. Near Kunar about thirty miles to the northeast they were forced inside by the rain, but, Bābur reports without additional comment: "I knew a talisman and taught it to Mullā ʿAlī Khan. He wrote it on four pieces of paper and hung it on four sides. That very moment the rain stopped."[65] His credulity here is striking, considering how often he expresses skepticism about miraculous stories elsewhere in the text. In any case his powerful talisman allowed him and his men to embark on a raft for their "dawn-draught." Afterwards they tried some beer from nearby Bajaur, but it tasted so bad they had *maʿjūn* instead.

"Entertainment" followed entertainment in the next few days after which Bābur and his men went hunting in the Alishang mountains northwest of Adinahpur, where many animals were killed in a typical hunting circle formed by local residents. On their return during yet another "entertainment" in a local *mālik* or headman's garden, Bābur broke off the remaining half of a tooth that had been partly broken earlier. By the time he arrived in India he would have been marked by this gap and the scars of many battle wounds. Then on January 24th, after reciting a *ward*, a section of the Quran read for private worship, Bābur and his men started back for Kabul.

Literary Interregnum II

Just as Bābur begins describing his march back to Kabul his memoir abruptly breaks off, resuming only on November 17, 1525 as he is leading his army out of the city for the invasion of India that culminated with his victory at Panipat, north of Delhi, on April 20, 1526. No firsthand account exists of Bābur's affairs for the intervening period. Haydar Mīrzā was still serving with his uncle in Kashgar and Bābur's daughter, Gulbadan Begim, the author of the *Humāyūn nāmah*, was only born in 1523. Neither writer includes significant information about this period, a contrast to their record

[65] BN-M, f. 250a.

of earlier and later years when they supplement Bābur's text. As is true for earlier gaps in the *Vaqā'i'*, Khwāndamīr is also largely unhelpful, and while Hasan-i Rūmlū provides some fragmentary information about Bābur's attempt to reoccupy Qandahar, it scarcely compensates for the loss of Bābur's detailed narrative.

Thus, even more than the years between 1508-1519 no biographical account is possible for this later gap in his memoirs. Other than imagining how Bābur may have matured as an individual, commander and ruler, the gap can only be filled with a brief political narrative and an hypothesis as to how these events are related to his earlier and later life. The connections to the both his political past and his future are obvious enough, partly because Bābur had little room for maneuver in the north and west, but increasing opportunities in northwestern India. Uzbek power blocked him from crossing the Amu Darya for another attempt on Samarqand or Ferghanah, and in the west the Safavids, while not viscerally hostile to Tīmūrids as were the Uzbek khans, controlled the Iranian plateau from Tabriz to Khurasan and in 1520 were suzerains of Qandahar, where the Arghuns had precariously reestablished themselves after Bābur's 1507 victory by offering fealty to Shībānī Khan.[66] The Lūdī Afghāns still held northwestern India, but the exceptional brutality of the new Sultān Ibrāhīm had acted as a catalyst to intensify the factional hostilities of this state composed of semi-autonomous Afghān lineages. Never a very cohesive political structure at any time in its brief history, by 1520 the Lūdī state was coming to pieces.

Given Uzbek and Safavid strength, Lūdī weakness, the proximity of Kabul to the Panjab and the memory of how easy it had been to extract funds from Bherah in 1519, the geographic logic of Bābur's *mulkgīrliq* ambitions in 1520 must have been unmistakable. The little that is recorded of his actions between January 1520 and November 1525 suggests that he had consciously developed a defensive strategy in the north and west: protecting his northern boundaries against further Uzbek attacks and guarding his western marchlands and commercial interests by reestablishing control over strategic and wealthy Qandahar, while expanding across the Indus into the wealthy Panjab plains. His presumptuous demand on

[66] BN-M, fs. 212b-213a.

March 3rd, 1519, just after occupying Bherah, that Ibrāhīm Lūdī recognize Tīmūrid sovereignty over northwestern India, followed the next day by naming his recently born third son Hind-al, the "taking of Hind," are persuasive signs that by that year he had already decided to try to conquer north India.[67] However, even if Bābur had conceived a kind of strategic plan he had neither the security nor the power to enable him to realize his intent in a series of carefully planned stages, so he continued to try to stabilize his frontier in the north and west while apparently looking for openings in the Panjab.

Between 1519-20 and 1524 Bābur strengthened his position in both the north and west. In the north he gained more effective direct control over Badakhshan by appointing his first son Humāyūn to rule the area after the death sometime in 1520-21 of Ways Mīrzā or Mīrzā Khan. Ways Mīrzā had gone to this area of northeastern Afghanistan with Bābur's blessing in 1507 and fought with him during the subsequent campaigns in Mawarannahr. With the Uzbeks along the Amu Darya, Badakhshan had to be quickly secured and Bābur appointed Humāyūn, then aged thirteen, to govern the province. Bābur and his wife, Humāyūn's mother, Māhim Begim, accompanied him there—an engaging human touch provided in this instance well after the fact by Bābur's daughter Gulbadan Begim, who might have learned of the trip from Māhim or Humāyūn himself.[68]

In Badakhshan Humāyūn undoubtedly governed through his *beg atekeh*, as Bābur had done in Ferghanah twenty-six years earlier. He remained there until Bābur called him to join the Indian campaign in the fall of 1525. What isn't clear from the fragmentary evidence for this period is the nature of Humāyūn's relations with another Tīmūrid, Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā, the grandson and last direct male descendant of Sultān Husayn Bayqara. Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā was then in Balkh, the adjoining and much wealthier province in northwestern Afghanistan. In 1517 or 1518 Bābur had married the then twenty-one year old Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā to his eleven year old daughter, Maʿsūmah Begim, and apparently visited the city of Balkh, the capital of the province just before or

[67] BN-M, fs. 226b-227a.
[68] HN, fs. 8a-b and n. pp. 256-58 for information on Humāyūn's mother.

after this marriage.[69] Bābur may have arranged the marriage to extend his influence into Balkh, where Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā originally may have acted as a Safavid feudatory, perhaps after the Safavids sent troops to support Bābur in 1511. Whatever his earlier relations with the Safavids he occupied Balkh in 1515 and joined Bābur outside Qandahar two years later.[70] After this Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā evidently acknowledged Bābur's suzereignty. He remained in Balkh during Bābur's early Indian battles but by September 1528 was campaigning with him in India.[71] After Bābur's death, however, all the sources agree that he fought for himself rather than for Humāyūn.

Sometime in the same year when Bābur assigned Humāyūn to Badakhshan he began to besiege Qandahar, while disingenuously discussing the fate of the city with Safavid officials in Harat. It was then controlled by Shāh Beg, otherwise known as Shuja' Beg Arghun, the brother of Muqīm Arghun, whom Bābur had forced to relinquish Kabul in 1504. Shāh Beg evidently held the city for the Safavids in Harat, whose captive he had recently been, but his family's ties to the city may have given him a substantial degree of independence there. Bābur had apparently set out to recapture Qandahar in 1517, but may have been bought off before reaching it. Another seige followed in 1519 or 1520. According to the Safavid historian Hasan-i Rūmlū, Bābur spent three years in and around Qandahar, and he agrees with Khwāndamīr, from whom he probably took his account, that Bābur succeeded in reoccupying the city only when the governor of the city simply handed it over to him, late in 1522.[72] Bābur then assigned it to his son, Kāmrān,

[69] Some of these events are related by Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar*, III, 400-403.

[70] "Khvāndmīr," Ghiyath al-Din b. Humām 'al-Dīn Muhammad, *The Makārim al-Akhlāq* T. Gandjeï ed., viii.

[71] BN-M, fs. 237a, 238a, for references to the tribute and explicit indications of fealty he sent to Bābur in 1519.

[72] Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-tawārīkh*, 220-21. In this instance Khwāndamīr, who was then in Harat and, presumably, relatively well-informed about events in Qandahar, provides a much fuller account of Bābur's efforts to retake the city. *Habīb al-siyar*, III, 587-89. For a discussion of dates during this poorly documented period see BN-B, pp. 435-37. Haydar Mīrzā writes that Bābur besieged Qandahar for five years, but doesn't give dates. However, if he dates Bābur's attempts from 1517 he would be approximately accurate. TR-T, f. 204a. Nonetheless, Bābur's cousin was nowhere near Qandahar during the early 1520's.

who was still posted there in 1525.[73] Shāh Beg had by that time extended his power into Sind, where his descendants were to encounter the Tīmūrids again, then ruling as emperors from Agra.

This confrontation over Qandahar was partly the completion of Bābur's unfinished business, but in retrospect it also represented the first of many conflicts between the Safavids and Tīmūrid-Mughuls over the wealthy and strategically located city. By 1523 or 1524, though, his western boundaries were secured, all the more so as the relentless dynamism and religious zealotry of Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī's early years had evaporated after he was overwhelmingly defeated by Ottoman forces at the battle of Chaldiran in 1514. From then until his death in May 1524 Ismāʿīl virtually retired from active military command and the direct control of state affairs.

Now more secure in Kabul than he had ever been Bābur was able to exploit the alliance offered him by Daulat Khan Yūsuf Khayl, the Lūdī governor of the Panjab, sometime in 1523. Described by Bābur in his section on Bherah as the son of Tatar Khan, one of the six or seven *sardār*s who, "sallying forth, took possession of Hindustan, making Bahlūl [Lūdī] *pādshāh*," Daulat Khan by this time had become frightened and alienated by Ibrāhīm Lūdī's drive to transform the Lūdī state from an Afghān tribal oligarchy into a centralized military despotism, and he opened talks with Bābur by sending his son to Kabul.[74] The son, Dilāwar Khan, would have been able to make the case for Daulat Khan by describing the grisly exhibit of tortured and executed Afghān leaders he had earlier witnessed when he had gone to Agra as his father's representative.[75] Now Daulat Khan joined in an uneasy alliance with Ibrāhīm's aging uncle, ʿĀlam Khan, and sought Bābur's help to challenge and presumably overthrow the reigning Lūdī ruler.

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[73] BN-B, Appendix J, xxxv.

[74] See BN-M, f. 225b for Bābur's precis of Lūdī rule in the Panjab. His use of the Arabo-Persian term *sardār* rather than the Turki *beg*, reflects usage Bābur acquired in India, where the term was commonly used. In the Indian section of his text he uses terminology associated with the region that he is careful never to employ earlier. Using the Persian chronicles, Awadh Bihari Pandey narrates the history of Lūdī rule and analyzes the character and policies of its three principal rulers in his work, *The First Afghan Empire in India* (1451-1526 A. D.).

[75] This at least is the scene described by Pandey, *The First Afghan Empire in India* (1451-1526), 195-96.

Responding to this opportunity Bābur marched from Kabul in the fall of 1523 and defeated a Lūdī army sent from Delhi. In January 1524 he occupied Lahore, appointing his own men to administer the city and nearby fortresses. As he began moving further southeast towards Delhi conflicts arose with Daulat Khan, perhaps because he realized that Bābur intended to rule the Panjab in his own name. Bābur now withdrew back to Lahore and shortly afterwards returned to Kabul, probably to deal with an Uzbek seige of Balkh.[76] Sometime after his return to Kabul Bābur's erstwhile Afghān allies Daulat Khan and ʿĀlam Khan, the latter still openly allied with Bābur, fell out among themselves as they struggled for control of the Panjab near Lahore. Defeated in this struggle ʿĀlam Khan fled to Kabul, where Bābur gave him troops to return to the Panjab before he himself set out in the fall 1524 or the winter of 1524-25 to raise the Uzbek siege of Balkh. In his absence ʿĀlam Khan and Daulat Khan united once again, and agreed that once Ibrāhīm was deposed ʿĀlam Khan would become Sultān and Daulat Khan would once again rule the Panjab. As Bābur's narrative resumes he describes the disorganized, unsuccessful attack that ʿĀlam Khan, allied with a son of Daulat Khan, made on Ibrāhīm Lūdī in the fall of 1525, just after he himself had marched out from Kabul and crossed the Indus on his way to confront the Lūdī ruler.

The Battle of Panipat

Bābur's narrative resumes on November 17, 1525 as he rides from Kabul for the last time, never to return to the city except after his death, when at his request his body was sent back to be buried just outside the city he so particularly loved. Choosing his words with obvious care he does not describe this march as a *chapqun* or even a *yurush* but says it was a *safar*, a journey or expedition "with the determination for Hindustan."[77] Thus after more than twenty years in Kabul Bābur was now unmistakably bent on conquest. Just a few days after leaving the city a messenger arrived with twenty thousand *shāhrukhīs* worth of gold *ashrafī*s and silver *tangahs* from the

[76] This much is known from an allusion in Bābur's memoirs. BN-M, f. 256a.
[77] BN-M, f. 251b.

revenues of Lahore, which Bābur forwarded on to Balkh, presumably to ensure the loyalty of Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā's garrison there. Earlier Humāyūn and his men had been summoned from Badakhshan, and Bābur waited impatiently for them in the *Bāgh-i Vafā'*, writing "stern letters to Humāyūn, speaking to him severely because of his late arrival at the rendezvous."[78] Apart from the likelihood that his son's progress was probably limited by the presence of Badakhshānī foot soldiers, Humāyūn by then was probably pausing in Kabul to visit his mother and other relations. While Bābur and part of the army waited for more than a week for his son in "the "delightful and pleasant" garden which "has been repeatedly described in this history," most drank on "drinking days:" Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and took "dawn draughts."[79] Otherwise they ate *ma'jūn*. After Humāyūn finally turned up with Badakhshānī forces just as Bābur's long-time companion Khwājah Kalān arrived from Ghaznī, usefully bringing several camel loads of Ghaznī wine, they marched out along the Kabul river toward the Khybar.[80]

Before crossing the Indus Bābur and his immediate retinue continued to conduct the invasion of India as a moveable feast. Shortly after leaving the *Bāgh-i Vafā'* he and a few others got on a raft and drank during the day while floating down the river. By the time they camped they had lost track of the army, which they located a day or two later. Then returning to horse they stopped at 'Ali Masjid just west of the Khybar Pass. Bābur himself dismounted on a knoll overlooking a small valley where the army was camped. Marveling at the beauty of the sight, he writes that "At night there was an entrancing glow from the troops' campfires," leading him further to recall that "For this reason each time that I dismounted at this spot I naturally drank. This time also in the same way I drank."[81] The next morning he took *ma'jūn* and fasted. Having then passed through the Khybar he and his men hunted and killed three rhinoceroses in the Bigram region on the eastern side of the pass. After describing this hunt Bābur's tone begins to change as he turns to discuss his army and then begins the narration of the march

[78] BN-M, f. 252a.
[79] BN-M, f. 252a.
[80] BN-M, f. 260a for a reference to the Ghazni wine.
[81] BN-M, f. 253b.

across the hostile or at least politically unpredictable region of the Panjab, then dissolving into internecine warfare of Afghān chiefs.[82]

While camped at Bigram he had assigned some *beg*s and *ickhi*s with accountants and clerks in six or seven units to count the troops "name by name" as they crossed the Indus. By then it was raining; it was the period of the northeastern monsoons. When they finally crossed on a bridge of boats on Saturday December 16th the "*beg*s, accountants and clerks" stationed on the bridge counted 12,000 men—"great and small, good and bad, *naukars* and non-*naukars*," as Bābur describes them. It is impossible to say how many of these men were actually troops; subsequent evidence suggests that they represented as few as half of this total. Later he remarks that many of this number were merchants and servants. Some were Badakhshānīs, some Hazārahs, some were Afghāns, some Mongols, some Turks. Contingents of Lūdī Afghāns also joined him as his force approached Delhi, but their loyalty was suspect and their numbers are unknown. Still, this was the largest army Bābur ever commanded and the one with which he "conquered" Hindustan.

Between mid-December, 1525 and 20 April 1526 Bābur conducted two campaigns in India. First, he regained control of Lahore and its surrounding territory; afterwards he attacked Ibrāhīm Lūdī at the Panipat battlefield north of Delhi. When Bābur crossed the Indus in mid-December Lahore was once again at least nominally under the control of the aged Daulat Khan, the disaffected Lūdī governor who had invited Bābur into India the previous year. In Bābur's absence he had expelled Bābur's officers from the city and some nearby forts, understandably offended by an alliance that Bābur self-servingly interpreted as a declaration of fealty to the legitimate Tīmūrid ruler. However, Daulat Khan's hope of holding the region for himself had evaporated when Ibrāhīm defeated the army that one of his sons and ʿĀlam Khan had led against Delhi just before Bābur arrived in the Panjab. If ʿĀlam Khan had been victorious at Delhi and then recognized as the new Lūdī sultān, he might have turned his army back to the Panjab to unite with Daulat's Khan's forces and oppose Bābur's claims. As it was, after

[82] For a summary of what is known of the bewilderingly complex relations of various Afghan lineages see Rita Joshi, *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals* (1526-1707), Chapters 1-3.

fleeing Delhi almost as a refugee, ʿĀlam Khan tried to join one of Daulat Khan's sons, but after being rebuffed, unwillingly went to Bābur.

By now it was late December and Bābur was camped at Sialkot along the foothills in the northern Panjab, a route of march dictated by the availability of grain in the monsoon-watered foothills.[83] Bābur sent troops out to capture Daulat Khan and his son Ghāzī Khan, and on January 3rd or 4th about sixty or seventy miles southeast of Sialkot, he surrounded them in Ghāzī Khan's small fortress of Milwat. A grandson of Daulat Khan's emerged to discuss terms with Bābur, who sent him back, as he candidly says, with "a morsel of a promise and threats and encouragement and menace."[84] The message was effective; Daulat Khan surrendered. His life was spared, but he had to endure humiliation as well as Bābur's lecture on his "misconduct." The scene Bābur describes reprises the drama of Khusrau Shāh's degradation on the banks of the Andarab in 1504. An old man, Daulat Khan too is made to seem doddering and almost senile, ridiculed as "a rustic and stupid *mardak*," in his case for daring to try to approach Bābur with his two swords still at his waist. Ordered to hang them from his neck instead he is brought before Bābur, who then through an interpreter told him:

> I called you father. I respected and honored you in such a way that was better than you could have desired. I saved you and your sons from the beggarly life of a Balūchī. I freed your family and *haram* from Ibrāhīm's prison. I gave you three crore's of Tatar Khan's lands. Have I so injured your rights that in your difficulties you should dispatch an army, descend on our provinces, causing such evil and strife?[85]

This *qarï mabhut mardak*, this "old stupefied little man," Bābur contemptuously continues, was able to say only "one or two words" in reply to Bābur's Tīmūrid claim to "our provinces" that he had first made to Ibrāhīm in 1519. In fear of his life Daulat Khan could hardly remind Bābur that as governor of the Panjab, he had invited

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[83] BN-M, fs. 254a-b.
[84] BN-M, f. 258a.
[85] BN-M, f. 258b. Balūch were and are the most impoverished nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples living in the desiccated regions of present day southeastern Iran and southwestern Pakistan. See among other sources Philip Carl Salzman, *Black Tents of Baluchistan* (Washington D. C,: Smithsonian, 2000).

Bābur into India, and hardly expected to lose Lahore for which he was to be compensated with some land that amounted to little more than a shabby pension. By recording his humiliation of Daulat Khan Bābur once again exhibits the casual arrogance derived from his Tīmūrid-Chingīzid descent, an inherited sense of superiority that apparently did not distinguish between "little men" with no lineage, whether the brutal Qipchaq Turk, Khusrau Shāh, or the merely aged and incompetent Afghān, Daulat Khan.

As Bābur's men began taking control of the fort disturbances broke out and Bābur "shot a few arrows," accidentally killing his son Humāyūn's *qissah-khanī*, his story-teller, or as Bābur elliptically puts it, linguistically at least avoiding responsibility by lapsing into metaphor, the story-teller "submitted to the arrow of his destiny."[86] Perhaps Humāyūn was mollified when his father gave him some of the valuable books that were found in the library within the fort. Bābur sent others off to Kāmrān in Qandahar. Daulat Khan himself was sent off in chains to Bherah with several other leading members of his *khaylkhānih*, his extended family or clan, but the poor man died en route. Less important Afghāns were given to Bābur's men to ransom as a source of income. Then after a party with the wines that Khwājah Kalān had brought from Ghazni, a typical denouement of successful actions, Bābur set out in earnest to confront Ibrāhīm Lūdī at Delhi.

As Bābur moved southeast across the Panjab in late January and February he ordered a garden built along the upper reaches of the Ghaggar river in a valley that apparently reminded him of the clear, rushing mountain streams of Kabul. At least he describes the scene in the same terms he used for the garden sites he admired near Kabul—as pleasant and agreeable with good air—suggesting in fact that other than India's major rivers it was the only such place in India.[87] This is the first of many passages in which he implicitly alludes to his desire to see India made over in Kabul's image, as difficult a task as the later English attempt to create English gardens throughout the subcontinent. However, at this spot about 180-90 miles north-north east of Delhi the nostalgic interlude was broken by the news that one of Ibrāhīm's commanders was advancing against them. Around February 25th as they left Amba-

[86] BN-M, f. 259b.
[87] BN-M, fs. 261b-262a.

lah, Humāyūn was given command of the experienced *beg*s who led the entire right wing of the army, and sent out against him, capturing 100-200 troops and seven or eight elephants as the rest of the Afghān troops fled the field. 100 were decapitated and 100 more sent back to Bābur's camp where they were executed, "as punishment" by Bābur's matchlockmen. Bābur expresses his pleasure with Humāyūn who was then just eighteen, and in Humāyūn's copy of the Persian translation of the *Vaqā'i'* Humāyūn wrote in the margin that just after the battle he shaved for the first time—noting this, he implies, was an act of filial piety because, he writes, Bābur had recorded his first shave in his memoirs.[88]

By now it was early March, the height of campaigning season in north India when the days are nearly always sunny with temperatures usually in the mid-eighties. As Bābur moved now almost due south toward Delhi he sent messengers back to Kabul with victory letters and news gatherers towards Delhi to report on Ibrāhīm's movements. Ibrāhīm was reported to be moving a few miles at a march, interrupted by two or three days in camp. Advancing from Shahabad on or just after March 13th, Bābur's army reached the Jumna river where he and his confidants consumed *ma'jūn* and took boat trips on the river while waiting for further news of Ibrāhīm's force. On April 1st Bābur sent the left wing of the army out against Ibrāhīm's advanced force of an estimated 5-6,000 men, and successfully savaged it while capturing several Lūdī's and sixty to seventy prisoners, most of whom were immediately executed, once again "as punishment."[89] About this time the army was counted again and was found to have been over estimated, although Bābur does not report what he believes the true number of his troops to have been. Ibrāhīm's force was estimated at 100,000 men and 1000 elephants, the heavy but cumbersome and skittish heavy armor of Indian armies.[90] It is likely that Bābur's estimates of Ibrāhīm's

[88] BN-B, pp. 466-7, n. 1.

[89] BN-M, f. 264a. Here as in the immediately previous passage Bābur uses the term *siāsat*, punishment," as his reason for executing prisoners.

[90] Simon Digby discusses horses and elephants in *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate, A Study of Military Supplies* (Oxford: Orient Monographs, 1971). He mentions that when moving at top speed elephants could advance at fifteen miles an hour. 53. Digby does not discuss the Panipat battle. The thirteenth-century Indo-Persian poet, Amir Khusrau, offers brilliantly dramatic portraits of Indian war elephants, emphasizing not speed but their massive, intimidating bodies that caused the earth to shake. See Wahid Mīrzā trans., *Khazāin-ul-Futūh* (Lahore:

forces is self-serving and grossly inaccurate. By April 12th Bābur's own force of perhaps eight or ten thousand fighting men reached Panipat on the west side of the Jumna, slightly more than fifty miles from Delhi. By then daily temperatures must have reached the low to middle nineties.

Bābur's account of the Battle of Panipat is one of the most detailed first-person accounts of a decisive battle in the early modern history of the Islamic world or Asia.[91] It is only equaled, and in fact surpassed, by Haydar Mīrzā's first-hand description of Humāyūn's defeat by Afghān forces in 1540 at the Battle of the Ganges.[92] Even saying that he omits many crucial details and never explicitly explains his triumph. In terms of general factors that might have influenced the conflict Bābur writes most caustically of Ibrāhīm's leadership. He expresses his contempt for the Lūdī Sultān's planning and lack of aggressiveness, and reports he told one of his *beg*s that as a commander Ibrāhīm lacked the generalship of the Uzbek Khans, although by saying so he reminds his readers that he himself suffered badly by that comparison. Bābur also suggests that Ibrāhīm was too much of a miser to spend his lavish resources to hire additional troops, although it is difficult to imagine that thousands of undisciplined mercenaries would have significantly influenced the battle, other than to slow the movement of the Afghān army, whose maximum pace was probably already limited to the speed of its elephants. Interestingly, he does not say that any Lūdī commanders defected before or during the battle, despite the unrest that had supposedly resulted from Ibrāhīm's oppressive rule. Finally in terms of these unquantifiable but possibly significant factors of morale, Bābur mentions that "some" of his own men were "very apprehensive and doubtful" before the battle. However, writes Bābur:

> Anxiety and fear were baseless. As God has predestined eternity nothing else was possible. Yet it was also impossible to fault them, for they were right. They had come a journey of two to three months

National Book Foundation, 1975), 59, 77-78 and 89-90. A few decades after Amīr Khusrau wrote the Arab traveler, Ibn Battuta, described elephants in Delhi that carried small catapults. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1325-1354 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1971), III, 744.

[91] No actual battles are described in Nicola Di Cosmo ed., *Warfare in Inner Asia*: 500-1800 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[92] TR-T, fs. 183a-184b.

> from their homeland (*watan*) and had to deal with strange people. We neither knew these people's languages, nor did they know ours.[93]

Yet, their very foreignness may have given Bābur's army a cohesiveness it might have lacked in Mawarannahr, where commanders could retreat back to their estates or transfer their allegiance to another Tīmūrid *mīrzā* or Chingīzid *khan*. Deep into this strange country there was safety in numbers and security only in victory.

Bābur reports that he stationed his army with the town of Panipat guarding his right flank while the left flank was protected by a system of ditches. Across the center of the battlefield he had some seven hundred carts tied together in the "Anatolian manner." Bābur had undoubtedly learned this tactic from his Ottoman firearms expert. It comprised a system of carts every twenty or twenty-five feet tied together and shields held in between, perhaps by footsoldiers. The latter may have been Badakhshānīs and Afghāns, as they commonly fought on foot in their native terrain. The vulnerable matchlock men stood behind with other footsoldiers. At intervals of an arrow shot, perhaps 100-150 yards, there were spaces that would allow 150 horsemen of the reserves to ride through to join the battle. As had been true at Qandahar in 1507 Tīmūrids and Chingīzids commanded most of the major sections of the army: Humāyūn on the right wing, Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā Bayqara, Sultān Husayn Bayqara's grandnephew, on the left wing, Chin Tīmūr Sultān, the Chaghatay Mongol and son of Kichik Khan on the right flank of the center along with the young boy Sulayman Mīrzā, the son of Bābur's cousin, Ways Mīrzā of Badakhshan, his longtime Ferghanah companion, Nizām al-Dīn ʿAlī Khalīfah, on the left flank of the center. Another Ferghanah companion, Khusrau Kükültash commanded the center with the less well-known Muhammad ʿAli Jang-jang. On the extreme edge of the right and left wings were flanking detachments charged with *tulghamah* or enveloping the enemy from the sides and rear. Mongols constituted at least one and probably both of these units.

Bābur's troops raided the Lūdī army during the seven or eight days the armies faced each other, but, Bābur writes, during this time Ibrāhīm did nothing. Finally, as Bābur and Bābur alone describes the scene, on April 20th Ibrāhīm led his forces out of

[93] BN-M, f. 264b.

their lines at dawn, but as they approached Bābur's ranks they hesitated, and then moved more slowly forward. Just then Bābur sent his flanking units to the right and left sides of Ibrāhīm's rear, and after both the left and right wings engaged so did forces in the center. The matchlockmen do not seem to have played a significant role in the battle, but as the forces engaged some cannon were fired—both *Farangī* and *zarb-zanān* are mentioned. The *zarb-zanān*, otherwise known as *zarb-zanān Rumi*, were some kind of cannon used by both Ottoman and Safavid armies in the sixteenth century.[94] Yet neither weapon could have been fired frequently enough to affect the outcome of the battle.[95] Bābur explicitly says the *Farangīlar* were fired "a few times," and that the *zarb-zanān* got off "good shots." Even when Ustād ʿAlī Qulī fired his newly cast *qazān* or mortar in March 1528 against the Chandiri fortress and just afterwards against recalcitrant Afghāns, sixteen seems to have been the maximum number of shots he could get off in one day.[96] At Panipat he did not have a mortar, one that Bābur describes him casting only in October 1526.[97]

[94] *EI2*, 1, 1063 &1066. See especially the discussion of "zarbzen" by Gábon Ágoston, "Ottoman Artillery and European Military Technology in the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57, Fasc. 1-2 (1994), 40.

[95] Note that when Humāyūn lost the Battle of the Ganges to Afghans in 1540 he was well supplied with cannon and mortars, but these did little to help an otherwise badly led and disastrously organized army. Considerable uncertainty exists as to the nature of firearms in use by Tīmūrid armies at this time or earlier. Bābur says that Sultan Husayn Bayqara was using a mortar-like weapon known as the *qazān* against Hisar in 1495. BN-M, f. 34a. Haydar Mīrzā, mentions that Humāyūn's army used the *zarb-zan Rumi*, literally the Anatolian canon, at the disastrous Battle of the Ganges when he was defeated by resurgent Afghān forces. He said it fired a ball of 500 *misqāl* or 2500 grams or about 5.5 pounds weight. He also mentions another canon or mortar called a *dīg*, perhaps the Persian translation of a *qazān*, as the term also means pot or mortar, that fired a brass ball weighing ten times as much a distance of a *farsakh* or *parasang*, that is approximately 3 miles. TR-T, f. 184a. These mortars were incredibly cumbersome weapons and the brass balls were extremely expensive; it took three or four elephants to haul one mortar cart. BN-M, f. 275a. G. N. Pant offers many useful illustrations of Mughul weapons, but does not resolve the issue of what guns Bābur had at Panipat. *Mughal Weapons in the Bābur Nāmā [sic]*. He suggests that Bābur may have had only two heavy guns with him, p. 151, although Bābur's use of the plural, *Farangīlar*, indicates that he had more, that is when the *zarb-zanān* are also taken into account.

[96] BN-M, f. 337. According to Bābur he ordered mortars to be made specifically for attacking fortresses. See f. 302a.

[97] BN-M, fs. 302a-b. Regarding the use of firearms in India before Panipat see

However, the battle was not decided by these novel weapons but in close combat by archery and with swords. As he describes the battle the right and left wings, the center and the "flanking units" swarmed around Ibrāhīm's troops, showering them with arrows. He says that even though the Lūdīs made small charges both to the left and right their forces became so pressed in on themselves that they could neither advance nor retreat. By noon the battle was won, Ibrāhīm was dead and the field was littered with an estimated 15-16,000 corpses. Bābur says nothing about his own casualties and on this occasion modestly attributes the victory to "God's grace and favor," not, as in 1507 at Qandahar, to his own battle plan. It can be inferred from his description, though, that in tactical terms the swift encircling maneuver of his flanking contingents of mounted archers and swordsmen carried the day. In his plan of battle he mentions that these contingents known as *tulghamah* were to remain in ambush and then as the enemy approached, circle around from both the right and the left to the enemy's rear.[98] This was the same kind of enveloping or flanking movement for which he admired the Uzbeks, who had used it successfully when defeating him outside Samarqand in 1501.[99]

Immediately following his account of the battle Bābur describes sending Humāyūn, Khwājah Kalān and others to seize the treasury in Agra and his brother-in-law Mahdī Khwājah with the young Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā and others to guard the treasury at

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Iqtidar Alam Khan "Early Use of Cannon and Musket in India, AD 1442-1526," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 24, 2 (1981), 146-64. Jos J. L. Gommans and Dirk H. A. Kolff ably survey the entire range of Indian military technology, tactics and organization in the Indo-Muslim era in their "Introduction to the edited volume *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia,*: 1000-1800 AD (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-42.

[98] BN-M, f. 266a. Bābur uses this word as a noun and a participle, i.e. as the detachments themselves or as their "flanking" action. It is evidently derived from a middle Turkic verbal root meaning to circle, encircle, go round etc., and was used in Chaghatay and Uighur. Räsänen, *Versuch Eines Etymologischen Wörterbuchs De Türksprachen*, I, 486. See also Borobkov, *Badā'i' al-Lugat*, 160, where both this and a variant spelling are given i.e *tulqamaq* = to encircle or surround.

[99] BN-M, f. 90a. A diagram of what purports to be the battle formation of Mongols who invaded India in the thirteenth century is given by Jagdish Narayan Sarkar in his essay, "Military Morality in Medieval India Laws of War and Peace," in Zoe Ansari ed., *Life, Times and Works of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavi* (Delhi: National Amīr Khusrau Society, n.d.), Plate B. It shows a half-moon-shaped battle formation in front.

Delhi, where he also appointed a *shiqdār* or governor and a *dīwān* or head of the treasury. Then the first Friday after the battle the poet and *ʿalīm* Shaykh Zayn and others entered Delhi and had the *khutbah*, the prayer read in Bābur's name, thus officially proclaiming his sovereignty as an Muslim ruler in India. He himself remained in camp. In the midst of recounting the flurry of these activities after Panipat he describes an interesting interlude, a kind of ritual in which Bābur publicly linked himself to Delhi's spiritual and political past. He thus circumambulated the tombs of two sufi's, the popular, influential Chishtī saint Nizām al-Dīn Awliya and the lesser known Khwājah Qutb al-Dīn, an earlier Chishtī but also a native of Ush in Bābur's homeland in eastern Ferghanah.[100] He also visited the tombs of the Sultānate rulers Ghiyās al-Din Balaban (d.1286) and ʿAlā al-Dīn Khiljī (d.1316), as well as the tombs and gardens of Ibrāhīm's two Lūdī predecessors, Sultāns Bahlūl and Sikandar Lūdī.[101] After the latter tour they boarded a boat in the Jumna and drank araq.

Shortly afterwards on April 28th they rode in eight days to the Lūdī capital at Agra, where they first stayed at houses in the suburbs. There Bābur pensioned off Ibrāhīm Lūdī's mother with a modest land grant south of the city, while refusing Humāyūn's offer of an enormous diamond, possibly the *kuh-i nūr,* said by appraisers, Bābur reports, to have been worth two and a half days of food for the entire world.[102] Finally, on May 10th Bābur entered the Agra fort and took up residence in Ibrāhīm Lūdī's house. At this appropriately climactic point in his narrative of conquest Bābur

[100] For Nizām al-Dīn Awliya's tomb as well as the annual *ʿurs* festival celebrated there see Regula Burkhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan, Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Thierry Zarcone discusses Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī Ûshī (d. 1235), a disciple of the founder of the Indian Chishtī order, in his article, "Central Asian Influence on the Early Development of the Chishtiyya Sufi Order in India," in Muzaffar Alam and Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye ed., *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture* (Delhi: Manohar for Centre De Sciences Humaines, 2000), 100-102. As the author points out Ush, near Andijan, was a sufi center already in the 10th century a. d. Circumambulation was a ritual practiced by Buddhists as well as Muslims. Ibn Battuta describes Qutb al-Dīn's tomb in the course of narrating his visit to Delhi, where he arrived in 1334. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* 1325-1354, III, 625.

[101] Ebba Koch has commented on the significance of these royal tours, "Shāh Jahan's Visit in Delhi Prior to 1648: New Evidence of Ritual Movement in Urban Mughal India," *Environmental Design* 9, 11 (1984), 18-29.

[102] BN-M, f. 268b.

once again pauses, as he does following his account of the capture of Samarqand in 1500, to offer an autobiographical signpost by putting his victory into favorable historical perspective. He follows that with a gazetteer-like description of India, similar to his earlier accounts of Samarqand, following the first capture of the city in 1497, and Kabul province, after occupying Kabul city in 1504.

Bābur begins the section with one of his most self-serving and misleading statements to be found in his autobiography. Writing here, though entirely in the passive, Bābur says:

> From the time that Kabul was taken in 910[1504] until this year there was always a desire for Hindustan. [However] a campaign was not feasible and the conquest of kingdoms not possible, sometimes owing to the *beg*s' timidity, sometimes owing to the relatives' non-cooperation. Finally such obstacles no longer existed. None of these less than noble *beg*s could speak out against this goal.[103]

Any of Bābur's men who read this passage must have found it hard to accept. Between 1504 and 1514 Bābur conducted himself still as a Central Asian Tīmūrid, not a potential conqueror of Hindustan. However much Tīmūr's 1398 raid may have stimulated him to think of conquering India, no evidence exists to show that he had resolved to do so before 1519, the year he took Bherah and named his third son Hind-al.

Having offered this interpretation of his Kabul years that is contradicted by his own narrative, Bābur then compares his conquest of India to that of former Muslim conquerors, a literary parallel to his earlier passage showing that his seizure of Samarqand in 1500 was a far superior achievement to Husayn Bayqara's occupation of Harat. Here his comparison, if exaggerated, is ultimately believable, at least based upon his own source. He writes that there were two earlier Muslim conquerors of India: Mahmūd of Ghazna (d. 1030) was the first; Shihab al-Dīn (Muhammad) Ghūrī (d. 1206) the second and "I, am the third."

> However, those *pādshāh*s' feats do not resemble mine, because when Sultān Mahmūd seized the throne Khurasan was under [his] control and Khwarazm and the *sultān*s of the border regions were obedient and submissive and the *pādshāh* of Samarqand was his vassal. The army was not two hundred thousand, [but who will say] it was not

[103] BN-M, fs. 269a-b.

> 100,000. Further the opponents were rajahs; there was not one *pādshāh* for all. Every rajah ruled independently in each region. Then there was Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn Ghūrī. Although the Khurasan government was not his, it was his elder brother's, Sultān Ghiyās al-Dīn Ghūrī. In the *Tabaqāt-i nāsirī* it is recorded that once he once led an army of 120,000 armored horses into Hindustan. These opponents also were rajahs; there was not one *pādshāh* for all of Hindustan.[104]

He continues with the comparison by first pointing out that he had only 1500 to 2000 men when he took Bherah in 1519 and but 12,000 men when he entered India the final time in 1525-26—some of whom were servants and merchants. Later in the narrative he also includes *tālibān*, religious students, in this total. He reminds his readers that when he took India he held only the provinces of Badakhshan, Qunduz, Kabul and Qandahar, and emphasizes that not only did these provinces provide no help, but that as some of them were so close to the enemy, that is the Uzbeks, they needed assistance—documented in his earlier reference to the dispatch of revenue from Lahore to Balkh. Bābur writes that their *khan*s and *sultān*s controlled Mawarannahr and commanded 100,000 troops. Then there was Sultān Ibrāhīm himself, who controlled India from Bherah to Bihar, territories that could have supported 500,000 troops. Even with *amīr*s in rebellion, he himself and his *amīr*s "were said to have an army estimated at 100,000 and as many as 1000 elephants." Even so, concludes Bābur, "we turned our backs on 100,000 Uzbeks and faced such a one as Sultān Ibrāhīm with a vast kingdom and such an army. And we were victorious owing to "Tengri's blessing and assistance."[105]

None of Bābur's troop estimates for his predecessors and Ibrāhīm should be taken at face value, or taken at all except with lavish doses of salt and equal measures of skepticism if not utter disbelief. The fact that he himself did not know exactly how many men he commanded to overawe Bherah is an instructive example. He estimates between 1500 and 2000. Nor does he really seem to know exactly how many fighting men he had at Panipat. He mentions that the 12,000 who crossed the Indus included merchants and servants, a commissariat in reality if not necessarily in formal

[104] BN-M, f. 269b.
[105] BN-M, f. 270a.

structure. His daughter, Gulbadan Begim, who had access to her father's memoirs and thus knew his total figures, says that of his 12,000 men only 6-7000 were *kār-āmadanī*, or "serviceable troops."[106] Perhaps this represents Gulbadan Begim's own attempt to glorify her father's feats, but it is also quite possible she was told this by someone with knowledge of the battle. It represents another caution against inflated troop estimates, either those given by Bābur himself or later historians. As for Ibrāhīm's army of 100,000 men and 1000 elephants, nothing can be proven and everything should be suspected. It would be surprising if he had even half that number at Panipat, and more than likely he commanded a much smaller army. In 1540 Humāyūn had no more than an estimated 40,000 men at the disastrous Battle of the Ganges when he lost to a resurgent Afghān army of an approximately 15,000 men.[107] These figures too are highly suspect. However, apart from these questionable troop estimates Bābur at least seems to offer a fairly realistic assessment of his own situation in 1526, and he doesn't even mention the Safavids to his west. Given all that had passed since he inherited his father's small state in 1494 his victory in 1526 was as stunning as was Humāyūn's defeat thirteen years later.

Bābur himself must first have realized the magnitude of that victory when on May 12th he began distributing the Lūdī treasury. Without unfortunately specifying the coinage but apparently referring to Lūdī silver *tangahs*, he describes in a short passage how he granted, now using Indian terminology, seventy lacs from the *khizānah* or treasury to Humāyūn.[108] A lac equals 100,000, so if, as

[106] HN, f. 9b p. 12. This is an unusual observation for Gulbadan, who doesn't usually discuss military affairs in such detail in the historical summary section of her own memoir.

[107] These estimates are given by Haydar Mīrzā, who was present at the 1540 battle. TR-T, fs. 183-85. Quite apart from questionable troop estimates, Humāyūn probably had considerably more men than actual troops, as was true of Bābur at Panipat.

[108] Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967), 369 for a brief discussion of Bābur's gift to Humayun. The silver *tangah* was the standard Tīmūrid coin, in fact the only Tīmūrid silver coin. Later it was known as the *Shāh Rukhi*, the term Bābur uses when enumerating the revenues of Kabul or the tribute extracted from Bherah in 1519. For a brief account of Tīmūrid coinage see R. E. Darley-Doran, "Tīmūrids," 4. "Numismatics," EI2, 10, 525-27. The fundamental problem in evaluating the weight and value of these coins is that the *tangah* had been used in India since the fourteenth century and under the Sultanate ruler, Muhammad Tughluq, debased. William

seems the case, he refers to coins, this figure equals a staggering seven million silver coins. At least coins could be weighed to estimate their number, unlike 100,000 sheep or sixty thousand troops, so this figure may be approximately correct. Other *beg*s were given from ten to six lacs and various elements of the army were rewarded "cash grants from the treasury each according to their rank."[109] Merchants, religious students and in fact everyone accompanying the army received a gift. He sent lavish presents to his sons and daughters in Afghanistan and valuable gifts to relations in Samarqand, Khurasan, Kashgar and Iraq (western Iran). *Nuzur* or religious offerings were sent to "shaykhs" [sūfīs] in Samarqand and Khurasan. Finally, Bābur gave "a *shāhrukhī* gift for every soul in Kabul province and the Wersek environs: every man and woman, freeman and slave, adult and child, old and young."[110]

The Conquest of Exiles

Yet for all the distance Bābur had traveled, for all he had endured and for all he had accomplished by May 1526, his new Indian state did not much resemble the spectacular Tīmūrid renaissance it became under his great-great-grandson, Shāh Jahān, who built the Tāj Mahal and called himself the second Tīmūr. By his own account Bābur entertained few illusions of grandeur after Panipat. Indeed, the scene he sketches of his conquests powerfully conveys a sense of a beleaguered Tīmūrid garrison state whose troops occupied Delhi and Agra but otherwise were surrounded by hostile Afghān chiefs, feared by people in the countryside and, like these

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Erskine, a translator of the Mughul-era Persian translation of the *Vaqā'i'* includes a lucid discussion of the type and value of the coinage in an appendix to the first volume of his work, *A History of India Under the First Two Sovereigns of the House of Taimur, Bāber and Humāyun* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1854," Appendix E "Bāber's Money of Account," 543-46. See also Shāhpur Shāh Hormasji Hodivala, *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics* (Bombay: Numismatic Society of India, 1976), I "Shāhrukhis" especially p. 10 where he mentions that these coins were also known by the names *Bāburi*, *Misqalī*, *Tanga-i misqalī.*

[109] BN-M, f. 293b.

[110] BN-M, fs. 293b-294a. Wersek, as Annette Beveridge points out, is located in Badakhshan. See BN-B, p. 523 n.1. Bābur's daughter, Gulbadan Begim, discusses these presents at length, giving more details, especially about the jewels and dancing girls given to each Tīmūrid *begim*. HN, fs. 9b-11a.

people, were suffering and dying from the scorching pre-monsoon winds that blow sand off the Rajasthan desert.

"When we came to this Agra," he writes, "there was an exceptional hostility between our people and the people roundabout. Its soldiers and peasants ran from our people. Apart from Delhi and Agra all the places that had fortresses strengthened the fortresses and refused to submit."[111] Afghāns held fortresses in Sambal, Bayanah, Gwaliar, Dulpur, Rapri, Kalpi, and Etawah. Other Afghāns beyond the Ganges who had rebelled against Ibrāhīm Lūdī several years earlier, proclaimed a new Afghān king at a meeting near Kannauj, about one hundred and twenty five miles due east of Agra.[112] Referring apparently only to the local situation in Agra's immediate vicinity, Bābur attributed what he called this *sharr u shurr*, this "wickedness and depravity" entirely to the *malhad mardak*, the "heretical little man," Hasan Khan of nearby Miwat.

Hasan Khan and his forefathers had been ruling the hilly Miwat region, just east of the Delhi-Agra road, independently of the Sultāns of Delhi for one or two centuries. Perhaps, writes Bābur, trying to understand why such a strategic region had never been permanently occupied, the Delhi Sultāns had left Miwat "incompletely subjugated"—*nimkareh ete'ati*—and had not established "direct control of the province"—*vilayatning zabtining paighi*, because they had such vast territories or because they never had the opportunity or because the region was mountainous.[113] In fact, various Delhi Sultāns had been trying to pacify this region, named for its inhabitants the Mêôs, since the mid-thirteenth century.[114] When he blamed Hasan Khan for his hostile reception in the Agra region Bābur seems to have been searching for a scapegoat. Whatever his own self-image, the common people had no reason to welcome a new marauding conqueror whose Tīmūrid identity either was unknown or if known, may have called up memories of Tīmūr's devastating invasion in 1398. Most of the fort holders were Afghāns who were still loyal to the Lūdīs or, at very least, to themselves. Events were to show that none of them were allied with Hasan Khan, except for temporary tactical considerations. When

[111] BN-M, f. 294a.
[112] BN-M, f. 294a.
[113] BN-M, f. 326a.
[114] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, A Political and Military History, 128-29.

in the fall Hasan Khan joined with his true ally, Rajah Rānā Sangā of Chitor and Ranthambor, most Afghāns submitted to Bābur.

Rather than explaining conditions in Agra in the summer of 1526, Bābur's scathing denunciation of Hasan Khan better illustrates how the victors write history. By the later testimony of Bayram Khan, the Aq Quyunlu Turk who later saved the Tīmūrid-Mughul state for Humāyūn and became tutor to Akbar, Hasan Khan was a kingly-looking man with a large following, a poet whose poems were widely known in the late sixteenth century.[115] That is unlike Khusrau Shāh, the scourge of the Tīmūrids who seems to have really deserved to have been called a *mardak*, Hasan Khan was anything but a "little man" in either appearance or accomplishment. Ruling territory so close to the Delhi-Agra road he and his ancestors may have found themselves so uneasily near the Islamic frontier in north India that they formally converted to Islam as a means of compromising with the formidable Muslim regimes in Delhi and Agra. Whether or not this was the actual reason for their conversion, Hasan Khan was exactly the kind of man whom Akbar and subsequent Tīmūrid-Mughul rulers eagerly incorporated into their regime. Who is to say that he was a less admirable man—or inferior poet—than Bābur himself? Hasan Khan's real offense was to defend the territory his forefathers had governed and to join with Rānā Sangā, evidently his nominal suzerain, in the coming campaign against the Tīmūrids.

Apart from the local suspicion and/or hostility Bābur experienced after Panipat, he and his men were also suffering the well known horrors of an Indian summer. "When we came to Agra," Bābur writes, "it was the hot season.... that year it was also very hot. Many people began dying then as if from the effects of the pestilential wind."[116] The daytime temperature in the Delhi-Agra region might have been as high as 110 degrees in May before the monsoons arrived. In addition to the stifling heat, the villages had been plundered, and the local people turned to highway robbery to feed themselves. The heat, devastation, depopulation and growing anarchy left Bābur's men unable to obtain grain for themselves or straw for their horses. These conditions, when combined with the

[115] BN-B, 523 n. 3 quoting Badauni, I, 447. Badauni, however, says he had a repulsive appearance.

[116] BN-M, f. 294b

political hostility of the Afghāns and Hasan Khan, precipitated a crises in Bābur's army.

Like Alexander the Great's men more than eighteen hundred years earlier, "Most of the *beg*s and valiant *yigitler* lost heart." They now wanted to go home, or at least back to Kabul or Badakhshan. By this time many had acquired property in the Kabul region. Bābur's largess had probably provided them with the plunder they had sought in India, enough to live a comfortable life amidst more familiar surroundings in a temperate climate. It was first an impulse, then a profound desire that Bābur himself felt with increasing intensity in the years to come. However, at this moment it threatened to ruin all he had achieved. Reflecting on his men's discontent in a passage he wrote just two or three years later, Bābur recalls that he "requested a consultation with all the *beg*s." He addressed them in a speech that is reminiscent of Alexander's reported attempt to persuade his men to march further into India.[117] His version of the address also has the literary and formal quality of Shakespeare's rendition of Henry V's St. Crispin's Day oration, and seems more likely to be intended as another political lesson for Humāyūn than a strictly accurate report of the language he used. Nonetheless, in it Bābur emotively and persuasively conveys the scope of his accomplishment.

> *Sultānat ve jahāngīrliq*, government and conquest, are not realized without implements and weapons. *Pādshāhlïq ve amīrliq*, kingship and nobility, are impossible without *naukar ve vilāyat*, retainers and provinces. We have struggled for several years, seen difficulties, traversed immense territory, exposed ourselves and the army to the perils of war and slaughter. *Tengri ʿinayati bile*, 'with God's favor' we have overpowered so many such enemies, seized such vast countries.[118]

By speaking these "reasonable and justifiable words," writes Bābur, "we dissuaded the vacillating men from leaving." [119] Well, not quite

[117] Bābur doesn't mention Alexander in this context but he could have learned about Alexander's Indian invasion from Firdausi's, *Shāh nāmah*. Abū'l Fazl ʿAllāmī, the author of the late sixteenth century work the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, mentions Alexander's tactics against the Indian monarch "Porus." III, 365-73 & 440. However, Firdausi's stories of Alexander do not include the scene of his commanders refusing to march further into India.

[118] BN-M, fs. 295a-b.

[119] BN-M, f. 295b.

everyone. Khwājah Kalān, his longtime companion and formerly retainer of his father, ʿUmar Shaykh, could not stand to remain in India. Khwājah Kalān was only the most senior and long-serving of Bābur's men who were appalled by the north Indian weather in April and May, 1526, so Bābur assigned him and his many liegemen to administer Ghazni and the nearby Sultān Masʿūdī Hazārahs. Taking his many retainers and gifts he finally received Bābur's permission to depart from Agra on August 28th. Just before he left, Khwājah Kalān scribbled a verse on the wall of a room of his house.

اكر بخير و سلامت كذر [ز] سند كنم
سياه روى شوم كر هواى هند كنم

*

If I should safely cross the Sind
My face be blackened if I long for Hind.[120]

Khwājah Kalān's poem sparked a tart reply from Bābur, which is the first poem he acknowledges writing in India—and the first Turkī *rubāʿī* listed in the *Rampur Dīwān*. Bābur's essentially good-natured pique at what he describes as the "mocking" verse of his friend, may have been heightened by the cleverness of the parting shot in which blackened not only means disgraced or humiliated but is also probably meant to allude to the associations that Iranian and Central Asian poets made between dark, black or night and Indians or India itself.[121] His reply to his old companion is the first of what might be termed his Indian exile verses, one of a series of poems signaling his realization that while winning India he had irretrievably lost his former pleasant life in Kabul. Exile verse represented a genre among Persian-language poets, although Bābur does not seem to allude to any authors whom he might have read and who composed such poems, such as the eleventh century Ghaznavid writer Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān of Lahore.[122] On this

[120] BN-M, f. 296a.

[121] Annemarie Schimmel discusses this imagery in her article, "Turk and Hindu: A Poetical Image and its Application to Historical Fact," in Spero Vryonis ed., *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1975), 107-26.

[122] For a discussion of exile poetry generally and that of Salman in particular

occasion Bābur wrote what he describes as his "offhand" or "impromptu" verse, which was thus a self-declared occasional poem, and sent it after Khwājah Kalān.

یوز شکر دی بابر که کریم غفار
بیردی سنکا سند و هند و ملك بسیار
ایسیق لیغی غه کر سنکا یوقتور طاقت
ساووق یوزینی کورای دیسانك غزنی بار
*

Voice a hundred thanks Bābur that the merciful Pardoner,
Gave thee Sind, Hind and many kingdoms.
If you cannot tolerate the heat,
Say, let me see the frigid face, go to is Ghazni.[123]

Bābur is probably reminding Khwājah Kalān that he had been assigned to one of the coldest, windswept parts of Afghanistan. However, this does not seem to have bothered his old friend who replied with a Turkī quatrain, observing, after complementing Bābur's wit, that India was a place where things were "upside down."[124]

Topsy-turvey indeed. Having won the greatest battle of his career Bābur now lost one of his closest friends, a man he never saw again. It was Khwājah Kalān to whom Bābur wrote in February 1529, "With whom do you hold gatherings? With whom do you drink wine?"[125] Sometime later Bābur wrote in the opening line of another *rubāʿī*, "Few of the circle of friends remain to me."[126] Khwājah Kalān's abandonment began a process of disenchantment that seemed to intensify with each new victory, with each new hot season, with each new monsoon. Later as governor of Kabul Khwājah Kalān corresponded with Bābur, who poignantly mourned the loss of his old friend's companionship as he began to experience the isolation of sickness and old age.

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see Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier*. Chapter 2: "Poets in Exile from Privileged Spaces."

[123] BN-M, f. 296. Yücel no. 315, p. 259, Köprülü, no. 177, p. 325 and *Rampur Dīwān*, f. 14b.

[124] BN-B, f. 296b n. 2 in which Beveridge quotes Pavet de Courteille, *Dictionaire Turk-Oriental* (Paris: l'Imprimeire Impériale, 1870), 214.

[125] BN-M, f. 361.

[126] Yücel no. 331, p. 263 and Köprülü, no. 193.

Lacking the freedom to retire to Kabul, Bābur was preoccupied first, with extending his authority to the towns and fortresses near Agra and then gaining control over India's geographic heartland: the Panjab, the Ganges-Jumna Duab and the Gangetic valley. His narrative of the last four years of his life represents another of the remarkable insights into the politics of the period, in this case a uniquely detailed and frank account of the complex process by which he tried to establish his sovereignty in the old Lūdī kingdom. As was the case with all his campaigns Bābur's gradual extension of his territorial dominance in India was achieved by a mixture of conquest and compromise dictated by the reality of a small army composed of semi-independent commanders. His Indian campaigns bore no resemblance to the devastating, ruthless assaults of his ancestors, Tīmūr and Chingīz Khan. He occupied and staffed with his own men the major cities of Lahore, Delhi and Agra, but in many other cases Afghān and Hindu lineages were reappointed to their old commands if they submitted to Bābur quickly enough. Even when they hesitated or actively resisted Bābur did not usually execute them and slaughter their followers, but usually assigned them to another command or living. Thus, at the level of the *parganah*, the Indian term, as Bābur observed, for *tuman* or district, Hindustan remained a largely Afghān territory,

As a way of tying submissive Afghāns more closely to him Bābur literally gave some of them the royal treatment. In November, for example, he invited the newly cowed Fath Khan Shirwānī to a *majlis* to share wine, and "ennobled him with the regard and favor" of Bābur's own clothes and turban before allowing him to return to his old estates.[127] Yet, however dramatically appealing rituals of shared drink and Tīmūrid clothes may seem—the mystique of military feudalism—they did not by themselves have a magical effect. Three years later Bābur was campaigning against Fath Khan Sherwānī and other Afghāns who had rejoined the Lūdīs, even despite the fact that Bābur had kept Fath Khan's son with himself as a hostage! When Bābur died in 1530 he had imposed little more than a fragile Tīmūrid military suzereignty in India. The superficiality of his control and the lack of Tīmūrid legitimacy was made starkly manifest nine years later when Humāyūn was

[127] BN-M, f. 303a.

defeated by resurgent Afghān forces, and then after the battle of the Ganges in 1540, expelled from India. Unlike the population of Samarqand, none of the people of India then had a history of or nostalgia for Tīmūrid rule.

In June, July and August Bābur was preoccupied with the continuing Afghān threat in the east and the increasingly ominous maneuvers of the formidable Rajput, Rānā Sangā, to the southwest. Some Afghāns such as Daulat Khan's son, Dilāwar Khan, had already joined Bābur, and several other important Lūdī *amīr*s also pragmatically pledged their loyalty after Panipat. The latter included three *amīr*s who had been campaigning against other anti-Lūdī Afghāns in the Ganges valley. Bābur gave these men large cash awards and assigned them—Firūz Khan, Shaykh Bāyizīd and Mahmūd Khan Nūhānī [Lūhārnī]—to seize the wealthy and strategic but as yet unconquered districts of Jaunpur, Oudh and Ghazipur. Parts of these regions were still controlled by leaders of the large, hostile Afghān force with its presumptive new sultān, that Bābur estimates at 30-40,000 men. These Afghans had remained camped near Kannauj. Many other hostile Afghān *amīr*s also still controlled the fortresses in the immediate vicinity of Agra. In July, though, the deluge of monsoon rains limited his action; he reports that it rained thirteen times during an awards ceremony he held around July 10th, drenching everyone who was not undercover.[128] Perhaps the rains had slacked off by mid-August when Bābur began pacifying the Delhi-Agra region by sending one hundred and fifty men to subdue the fortresses of Sambal, about eighty miles due east of Delhi, and demanded the surrender of Bayanah, a vital fortress just fifty miles west-southwest of Agra.

By then Bābur became increasingly concerned with the Rajput Rānā Sangā. In his survey of the rulers of India he lists Rānā Sangā as the second most powerful "infidel" in India. He says that only the Rajah of Vijayanagar far to the south commanded more men and territory.[129] Originally the ruler of the formidable Chitor fortress deep in the Rajasthan desert, in the early sixteenth century Rānā Sangā had aggressively expanded southeast to occupy Ranthambor and Chandiri in Malwa, formerly the territories of the

[128] BN-M, f. 297a.

[129] The kingdom is described by Burton Stein, *Vijayanagara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Muslim Sultāns of Malwa or Mandu. According to Bābur, Rānā Sangā had corresponded with him in Kabul, promising to move on Agra when Bābur attacked the Lūdīs at Delhi, but, says Bābur, he had done nothing. Now the Rajah had begun campaigning against the Afghān-held fortress of Kandar near Ranthambor, whose governor immediately sought Bābur's aid. Rānā Sangā's attack on Kandar seems to have crystallized Bābur's realization that the Rajah represented a looming threat on his southwestern flank. He must have understood then if not before that the Rajah saw Bābur's destruction of the Lūdī state as an opportunity to expand rather than to cooperate with him.

In any event Bābur himself now realized that as the monsoon further subsided in mid to late August he and his men had to decide between attacking the Afghān army in Kannauj, only two or three days march to the east, or turning to the southwest against Rānā Sangā, whose immediate intentions were still not entirely clear. Meanwhile his troops had successfully begun reducing the fortresses of Etawah, Dulpur and Bayanah, immediately to the southeast, south and southwest of Agra, an "easy" task as he describes it, easy probably, in retrospective comparison with the coming epic clash with Rānā Sangā. As he outlines his strategy, Bābur says he believed that if he defeated his more formidable enemies first, then commanders of nearby fortresses would have no alternative but to submit. This is compelling military and political logic, and it explains the basic pattern of his Indian campaigns. However, his subsequent admission that Rānā Sangā was "not imagined to be much [of a threat]," shows that initially he badly misjudged the relative dangers of Afghāns and Rajputs.[130] Here again Bābur is remarkably open about military affairs, a further possible indication that he saw his memoirs at least partly as a text for Humāyūn and his descendants.

Humāyūn as it happened now volunteered to attack the Afghān forces. He left Agra on August 21st. Bābur's original estimate of Afghān numbers at 20-30,000 must have been wildly exaggerated—as he never alludes to it again and what Afghāns there were never gave battle but steadily retreated before Humāyūn's force, which could not have numbered more than a few thousand men.

[130] BN-M, f. 299a.

As late summer gave way to autumn Humāyūn marched with relatively little opposition down the Ganges to Jaunpur and Ghazipur, while Bābur remained in Agra. On October 31st Bābur urgently sent a messenger to Humāyūn that Rānā Sangā was near and that he, Humāyūn, should appoint a commander at Jaunpur and taking the army, should himself come quickly.[131] Nonetheless, Humāyūn seems to have continued his campaign further down the Ganges, and did not return to Agra until early January, "paying his respects" to his father on January 6, 1527.

In the meantime the Rajah's approach had unnerved Nizām Khan, the Afghān commandant of the Bayanah fortress southwest of Agra, who relinquished the fort to Bābur in early November. Bābur appointed his brother-in-law, Mahdi Khwājah, to this vital post that stood between Rānā Sangā and Agra. The Afghān commander of Gwaliar similarly felt threatened and Bābur sent men who were able to occupy that vital fortress to his south later in the same month. Dulpur then surrendered as well. Just at that moment Bābur had to send a detachment of his men north to Hisar Firuzah, an area northwest of Delhi he had earlier awarded to Humāyūn, where they quickly defeated a large group of local Afghāns who had "rebelled." With that he apparently turned his entire attention, as he brings his narrative, to Rānā Sangā now approaching Bayanah and Agra from the southwest.

In late January or early February Bābur ordered Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā and other Turco-Mongol officers to reinforce Bayanah, as he received multiple reports that Rānā Sangā was indeed on the march. As the identify of these men suggests, Bābur relied almost entirely on his original *beg*s in this campaign. He remarks later in the narrative that he didn't trust the "Hindūstānī *amīr*s," by which he meant the Afghāns, and therefore he sent them to garrison recently captured forts.[132] However, not all of them were dismissed, and in fact one of the sons of Bahlūl Lūdī, the founder of the Lūdī dynasty, as well as Dilāwar Khan, Daulat Khan's son, and several sons of other important Lūdī loyalists fought with Bābur in the climactic battle with Rānā Sangā.[133] Bābur himself remained in Agra until February 11th, perhaps

[131] BN-M, f. 303a.
[132] BN-M, f. 308b.
[133] BN-M, fs. 319b-321a.

because it began raining heavily again, presumably the effect of the northeast monsoon. At this time in late January or early February Bābur apparently had little idea of the ferocity of the battle to come, for he remarks that during these rains there was a continuous round of *suhbatlar*, of entertainments or parties, some of which Humāyūn attended, even though his father says that his son disliked them.[134]

Only after he began assembling his army on the plain outside Agra did Bābur begin to receive the first unsettling reports that men from Bayanah, who had sent raiding parties outside the fortress against Rānā Sangā, had been defeated and scattered. Some of the men he had earlier ordered to reinforce Bayanah began returning to Agra with reports of the "fierce and warlike army of the *kāfir* or infidel, Rānā Sangā," the first hint of the new crises in morale that began sweeping his men, unnerved by the defeats of their skirmishers and Rānā Sangā's reputation. Intending to camp at the reservoir or tank near Sikri, later the site of his grandson, Akbar's great sandstone palace, Bābur took the army forward with smaller detachments patrolling in front. One of these, a unit of between 1000 and 1500 men, was savaged by a large force of Rajputs, and when Bābur sent reinforcements forward they too were defeated. Bābur now ordered his entire army forward but Rānā Sanga's men withdrew and for the next three weeks his men prepared the battlefield beside a large lake. As this work was going forward about five hundred reinforcements arrived from Kabul in the second or third week of February. They included a grandson of Sultān Husayn Bayqara, and an astrologer. Among this group was one Bābā Dūst Sūchī, literally the water carrier, who had gone to Kabul for wine and returned with three camel loads of "reasonable Ghaznī wines."[135]

If Bābur had been writing a more artful history rather than a chronicle of events he might have used the arrival of the Ghazni wine as a literary prologue and psychological catalyst for the dramatic decision he made a few days later to renounce wine. It is reasonable to believe that he had experienced occasional spasms of guilt since he had vowed and failed to stop drinking when he

[134] BN-M, f. 308a.
[135] BN-M, f. 311a.

turned forty. After all his early religious training had kept him from drinking throughout most of his youth. Based upon the implicit evidence of his narrative it does not seem likely, though, that these moral twinges had brought on overwhelming remorse after he turned forty. When he did finally renounce alcohol in late February 1527 he did not decide to abstain from drink primarily because he felt intense moral disgust for his dissolute behavior. Instead, he did so as a dramatic ritual act to demonstrate his resolve in the face of the sense of uncertainty and dread that seemed to be paralyzing his troops' resolve in the face of an impending battle with Rānā Sangā, a far more formidable foe than the Afghān Ibrāhīm Lūdī. He recalls that as he rode out from his Sikri camp on February 25th to tour the battlefield "It occurred to me that the wish for repentance had been constantly on my mind [and] that the commission of these illegal acts had continually afflicted my heart. I said 'O soul:

How long will thou savor sin? Repentance is not tasteless, savor it!
Why are you defiled by sin? Why do you mortify your contentment?
Why are you passions' slave? Why do you render your life pointless?
You are marching, intent on war. You are facing your own death.

He who prepares himself for death, In this situation, you know what to do?

*

He distances himself from all forbidden things.
He separates himself from all sin.
He saves himself from transgression.

*

I repented from wine-drinking,

*

The gold and silver flasks and cups, All drinking vessels were broken up.
I brought and smashed them all. Renouncing wine, I quieted my heart.[136]

Bābur did evidently renounce wine this day, and he may have recalled the first two lines of these verses when he was riding out, because they are in Persian. The remaining Turkī verses, the last

[136] Ibid., f. 312a.

four of which constitute the only verse narrative in the text, must have been written later, probably when Bābur composed the entire section. The very public and political nature of this event is made clear in the proclamation dated the following day and composed in a style that might be called high-church Persian by Shaykh Zayn, one of the poets accompanying Bābur on the December wine party, a participant in the forthcoming battle and the later author of the *Fath-nāmah* or Letter of Victory. Prefaced by and sprinkled with Quranic quotations, this *farmān* or royal decree describes the renunciation of wine as the greatest of renunciations but also pointedly mentions "It is hoped" his renunciation would be rewarded with an increase in victories.[137] The fear of failure that probably prompted Bābur to dream of Khwājah Ahrār before Samarqand in 1500 now led him to manifest Islamic piety before the battle with the infidel Rānā Sangā. The danger must have seemed equally great.

First, the morale of the army was near collapse. Referring to the recent defeats and the ominous reports of Rānā Sangā's army Bābur recalls, "At such a time, when because of past events and stupid talk—as has been mentioned—the troops were frightened." Matters were made even worse by the astrologer, Muhammad Sharīf, who had arrived with the others from Kabul, and had been going about the camp prophesying defeat if the army attacked from the west where Mars was in the ascendant.[138] He adds that, no one in the army countered such talk. "Brave talk and manly words were not heard from anyone."[139] Few may have felt like offering heroic words since "Exactly at this time..." Bābur's recent hard won gains largely evaporated when "Most of the Hindūstānīs and Afghāns repudiated their recently declared loyalty and reoccupied their districts and provinces."[140] Koil, Sambal and Kannauj all fell or were abandoned by their Tīmūrid commanders, Gwaliar was besieged and Hasan Khan openly joined Rānā Sangā. After Kabul, this was Bābur's second experience of the pitfalls of empire-building beyond the familiar and relatively friendly Turco-Mongol territories in Mawarannahr. It presaged the difficult years to follow and offers the first insight into the nature of early "imperial"

[137] Ibid., f. 313b.
[138] Ibid., f. 311b.
[139] BN-M, f. 314b.
[140] BN-M, fs. 315a & 328b.

Tīmūrid-Mughul control over the socially diverse Indian countryside.

In a second of his inspirational speeches, Bābur then "summoned *beg*s and warriors," and reminded them that life is transient and that a brave death is better than a cowardly life. Facing a Hindu ruler he could appeal to more than the self-interest and shared sacrifice that he invoked earlier to quiet his men's discontent. Bābur now used Islam not only to legitimize the battle but sanctify death. He inspired his men, he says, by quoting two separate Persian verses and a Turki *rubā῾ī* followed by the invocation of Islamic ideology that promised recognition as a *ghāzī* or heroic warrior for those who would fight and survive and designation of a *shāhīd* for others killed in battle. "I said," Bābur writes, first in Persian:

هر که آمد بجهان اهل فنا خواهد بود
آنکه پاینده و باقیس خدا خواهد بود

*

Everyone who enters man's world will perish.
He who is eternal and perpetual is God.

Then in a Turki *rubā῾ī* whose lines repeat the sentiment of the first Persian hemistich and read like literal translations of Persian verse:

هر کیم که حیات مجلسی غه کیریب تور
عاقب اجل پیمانه سیدین ایچکو سیدین
و هر کیشی کیم تیریکلیت منزلیغه کیلیب تور
آخر دنیا غمخانه سیدین کیچکو سیدور

*

Who so ever joins life's congress,
Will finally drink death's cup,
And each who enters life's mansion,
Will at last emerge from the house of sorrow.

Finally, Bābur quoted another Persian verse from Firdausi's *Shāh nāmah*, echoing his earlier criticism of his cousin for refusing to fight the Uzbeks.

بنام نكو كر بميرم رواست * مرا نام بايد كه تن مرك راست
It is better if I should die with a good name.
I must have a name, as death owns the body.

Then, recalls Bābur, "*beg*s and *naukar*s, great and small, joyfully took the Quran into their hands and with just this spirit swore an oath. This was wise [on my part]. Seeing and hearing this was good for friend and foe from far and near."[141]

In his earlier description of the battle of Panipat Bābur does not even invoke Tīmūrid legitimacy as a justification for his attack on Ibrāhīm Lūdī. These claims were transparently weak as Tīmūr had never ruled India, and he mentions them only once after the Bherah campaign, when he sent a hawk and a demand for recognition from Ibrāhīm Lūdī who, from an objective point of view, treated them with the dismissive contempt they deserved. The implicit message of Bābur's narrative before Panipat is that he was primarily motivated by his *mulkgīrliq* or imperial ambitions. These were fueled by his Tīmūrid identity but that meant virtually nothing in India, and it would have done little to fire the resolve of his multi-ethnic army. Nor does Bābur offer a religious justification for his attack, although in a ritualistic fashion later in the Indian section of the text he does remark that God and not himself "had defeated that powerful enemy" Ibrāhīm Lūdī.[142]

The battle of Kanwah with Rānā Sangā is, however, depicted as an episode in the epic struggle between Muslims and infidels, Islam and heresy, good and evil, light and darkness, in which Bābur's tactics are explicitly identified with the Ottoman *ghāzī*s or heroic warriors of Anatolia. And it is Shaykh Zayn writing in Persian who describes the battle in a theological idiom and metaphorical style unseen in the rest of the *Vaqā'i'*. Bābur says he uses Shaykh Zayn's elaborate *Fath-nāmah* or letter of victory written on March 29th, or twelve days after Kanwah, because, he implies, it accurately describes the armies and the fighting. In fact, amidst Quranic quotations, elaborate religious rhetoric and the vocabulary of the Iranian epic, Shaykh Zayn gives a far more elaborate account of Kanwah than Bābur's does for Panipat. Despite the sometimes impenetrable

[141] BN-M, fs. 314b-315a.
[142] BN-M, f. 270a.

thicket of his prose, he also manages to convey a sense of the ferocity of this clash between the Turco-Mongol and Rajput warrior classes.

On Bābur's side the army seems to have been positioned very much as it had been at Panipat, with the principal cavalry forces arrayed in front of carts tied together, behind which stood Ustād ʿAlī Qulī, the Ottoman artillery advisor, with his single mortar, the *zarb-zan* guns and matchlockmen. The Mongol flanking horsemen were again stationed on the edges of both the right and left wings, the *baranghar* and *javanghar*, but it is not possible to tell from Shaykh Zayn's elaborate description of the battle that they turned the tide as Bābur implies they did at Panipat. Still Bābur's later award of a fifteen-lac stipend and command of the Alwar fortress to the Mongol Tardikah for his "good work" on the right flanking force suggests that this *tulghamah* or enveloping maneuver was also effective at Kanwah.[143] Shaykh Zayn describes repeated cavalry charges on either side, struggles so intense that eventually Bābur ordered the matchlockmen out from behind the carts into the midst of battle. Quoting from the *Shāh nāmah*, a source of martial images for many Persian and Indo-Persian writers, Shaykh Zayn describes a battlefield turned from day to night by the dust churned up by the clashing armies.[144] Sometime into the battle, he says that Bābur's men forced the Rajput wings onto the center as had been done at Panipat, and this, Shaykh Zayn indicates, triggered a final desperate and nearly successful Rajput charge that penetrated deep into the left wing of the Tīmūrid forces.

Brilliantly blending closely observed details with the imagery and language of an epic, Shaykh Zayn concludes his artful account by saying that just at this moment "the breezes of victory and prosperity blew over the meadow of our auspicious *nawāb* and brought the joyful [Quranic] tidings, 'Yea, we have granted you a clear victory.'"[145] Without further explanation he writes that the Rajput forces retreated, leaving behind many slain rajahs and senior commanders and masses of dead, immediately transformed into minarets of skulls. Just below his seal on this *Fath-nāmah* Bābur now

[143] His command is mentioned in BN-M, f. 321a and his reward in f. 326b.
[144] BN-M, f. 323a.
[145] BN-M, fs. 323b-324a.

added the *rubāʿī* that begins: "I became a desert wanderer for Islam:"

اسلام اوچون آواره یازی بولدوم
کفار و هنود حربسازی بولدوم
جزم ایلاب ایدیم اوزنی شهید اولقه
المنه اله که غازی بولدوم
*

I am become a desert wanderer for Islam.
Having joined battle with infidels and Hindus.
I readied myself to become a martyr,
God be thanked I am become a ghāzī.[146]

Bābur was undoubtedly genuinely relieved he had survived the battle of Kanwah to be recognized as a *ghāzī* rather than killed to be revered as a *shahīd* or martyr. Yet this poem otherwise seems more like a ritualistic observance or an ex post facto religious legitimation than an cry of exhilarated triumph, as indeed is implied by the opening line, "I am become a desert wanderer for Islam," for we know that Islam played no role at all in his Indian exile, although he may possibly be referring here only to the Rajasthan desert.[147] It was only after he fought Rānā Sangā that he put *ghāzī* on his titles and currency. In 933 a.h. (1526/27) he added the title *ghāzī* to his seal and on coins, some of which read, as does a coin minted in Lahore in 936 a.h. (1529-30) "Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur Pādshāh Ghāzī."[148] However, this should not suggest some profound rearrangement of Indian alliances into Muslim and Hindu camps either then or later in Tīmūrid-Mughul history; many Afghān Muslims continued to ally themselves with the "infidel" Rajputs after that battle, as Bābur himself began to do not long afterwards.

Heat and the lack of water convinced Bābur not to pursue Rānā Sangā to Chitor, his formidable fortress in the Rajasthan desert,

[146] BN-M, fs. 324b-325.

[147] A fine point perhaps but Bābur normally uses the term *ghurbat* when describing his "exile" in India—from Kabul and Ferghanah.

[148] BN-M, f. 324b for Bābur's statement to this effect and Charles J. Rodgers, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Moghul Emperors of India*, Pt. I, 1-4.

nearly two hundred and fifty miles to the southwest. Instead he sent men to reestablish Tīmūrid control over fortresses and towns he had taken earlier and then lost, as he now puts it, "during the Sangā rebellion." These were Chandawar and Rapri, just east and southeast of Agra, Kannauj, nearly one hundred and twenty-five miles dues east on the Ganges, Koil (Aligarh), about fifty miles north of Agra, "Lauknaur," nearly another one hundred miles northeast of Koil and thirty miles east of Sambal.

In other ways Bābur now began stabilizing his new regime. After he had lavishly distributed the Agra treasury in May, 1526 he was, he explicitly says, too distracted by Rānā Sangā's approach to begin establishing his own administration. On April 25, 1527 he returned to Agra and made appointments to the towns and fortresses his men had reoccupied. In early May, just about a year after he had first entered Agra, he allowed his men to retire to their districts during the monsoons and present themselves afterwards. By this time Humāyūn had already left for Kabul along with his Badakhshānī troops, who had reached the limit of their endurance and patience. He was only one of several men to leave, and Bābur gives another insight into the negotiated nature of his campaigns when he remarks:

> "Well before the *kāfir ghazāt* (*the infidel war*)...it was mentioned that after the victory [their] duty was over and that if anyone wished to go permission will be given. Humāyūn's *naukars* were mainly Badakhshānī's and people of that area never had endured a one or two-month campaign. They were restless before the combat. Since both a promise had been made and Kabul was open, for these reasons the opinions were that Humāyūn should be given leave for Kabul.[149]

Leaving with an unspecified number of troops in mid-April—and looting several rooms of the Delhi treasury on his way—Humāyūn was joined in Kabul by Bābur's brother-in-law Mahdī Khwājah, who had fought in the left wing both at Panipat and Kanwah, but was "uncomfortable" in India. A third man, Tardi Beg Khaksar, was given leave to go to Bābur's son Kāmrān in Qandahar, where Tardi Beg planned to abandon soldiering for the life of a *darvīsh* or itinerant mendicant/ contemplative mystic.[150]

[149] BN-M, fs. 326b-327a.

[150] BN-M, f. 329b. "Darvīsh" the polar opposite in the Islamic world order from the *shāh* or *sultān*; the latter a person consumed with worldy affairs, the

Enough men left for Afghanistan in May or June, 1527 that Bābur quotes a poem, a *qitʿah* he had written the previous year, addressed generically to all those who had abandoned him, but perhaps probably first written at the time of Khwājah Kalān's departure in 1526.

O those who left the country of India,
Talking about its misery and distress,
Remembering Kabul and its lovely climate
You ardently left India, that furnace.
Have you looked for and found there,
Pleasure and delight, elegance and grace.
As for us we are still alive, thank God
Although there has been great pain and endless distress,
Sensual pleasure and bodily toil,
You have survived these as also have we.[151]

Even though this poem had likely been written a year earlier, Bābur may have chosen to insert it here because when he was writing this section just a short time later he knew that the battle of Kanwah was the climax of his Indian conquest. In May 1527, while he and his men directly controlled only a small area, they were not immediately threatened by either Rajput or Afghān forces, and from May until December the Tīmūrids did not undertake any major campaigns. They spent the fast of Ramadan in June in the *Hasht Bihisht* or "Eight-Paradises" garden that he had begun building in Agra a few days after arriving there the previous year—after bitterly observing the lack of flowing water and geometrically planned gardens in India. Just before the ʿĪd festival celebrating the end of the fast, they moved on to the Sikri battlefield where a *Bāgh-i Fath* or "Victory Garden" was being built. Bābur notes that since his eleventh year, that is just before his father's death, he had never spent the ʿĪd festival in the same place, and to maintain the custom is why he left Agra to celebrate in Sikri. His remark is a useful reminder of the tumultuous life he had led since ʿUmar Shaykh's untimely death in Akhsi in 1494. In many ways Bābur was no less active after Kanwah than before.

former a person with none. The *darvīsh* was often a sufi, but if so usually a solitary, wandering one. Hamid Algar "Darviš," in *EIr*, 7, 74-76.

[151] BN-M, fs. 329b-330a. Yücel, no. 283, no. 409.

Bābur fought many other major battles in India, including a successful assault on the formidable Rajput fortress of Chandiri in January 1528 and subsequent campaigns to the east in Bihar and Bengal. Yet he never again faced enemies as formidable as Ibrāhīm Lūdī and Rānā Sangā. In 1528 and 1529 Bābur himself must have felt that the years after Kanwah represented his life's denouement. Both his prose text as well as his poetry show that he was increasingly faced with his own mortality as he repeatedly fell ill. In fact, he mentions being sick for an extended period in August 1527, when he took more than two weeks to recover. His narrative and poetry of those years are among the most emotional and affecting of his life, a dramatic counterpoint to the Ferghanah years, that is to the seemingly inexhaustible resilience and emotional perplexity of his youth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

هر که از ایران به هند آید تصور می کند
اینکه چون کوکب به شب ، درهند زر پاشیده است

Whoever comes from Iran to India imagines,
That in India gold is scattered like stars in the evening sky.
17th century Safavid poet Ashraf Māzandarānī[1]

More than a year after Humāyūn left India for "Kabul and its lovely climate" in April 1527, Bābur sat down in Agra to write his Indian gazetteer.[2] In it he tells readers of the *Vaqā'i'* that weather was but one aspect of India's environment and culture that distinguished it from both Mawarannahr and Kabul. As was true of most other travelers and émigrés who came to India from the north and west, spanning the centuries from Greek and Roman to British times, Bābur found the country stunningly different from the lands and societies he knew in nearly every respect—in his case from both his Ferghanah homeland and also from his adopted Afghan home. Some of these differences he valued for practical reasons, some he thought aesthetically pleasing and exotically interesting, but in most instances he found India and its society to be fundamentally distasteful. Bābur was not the first Central Asian Muslim who recorded his conflicted feelings about India. The scientist Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī did so at considerably greater length five hundred years earlier, and his extensive treatise helps to put Bābur's much briefer survey in perspective. Yet, while al-Bīrūnī's abilities, education and interests differed significantly from Bābur's, his response to India was remarkably similar. In particular both men agreed that while they admired some things about India, they found the

[1] Gulchīn-i Ma'ānī, *Kārvān-i Hind* I, 71.

[2] At least Bābur mentions writing parts of the botanical section after "three years in Hindustan," which probably means that he wrote it during the 1529 monsoon season, sometime after returning from his Gangetic campaign in late June. BN-M, f. 287a.

cultural boundaries separating themselves from Hindu society to be virtually impassable. However, the views of Bābur and al-Bīrūnī should also be measured against those of the patrilineal Turk but Indian-born Muslim, Amīr Khusrau, the thirteenth and early fourteenth century Indo-Persian poet whose work Bābur knew well. Amīr Khusrau's view of India seems fundamentally at odds with their reactions, although his ecstatic praise of his homeland was not an unsolicited testimonial but was part of the larger body of panegyric poetry he produced for his patrons, the Turkic sultans of Delhi.

The Boundaries of Hindustan

In his Indian gazetteer and in other comments scattered throughout the *Vaqā'i'* Bābur describes the stunning transition anyone experienced who traveled from Kabul to India. Writing with his usual care, he reports that after leaving Kabul one first passed through a transition zone and then entered India proper after crossing the Indus River. He himself first crossed the boundary between the Afghān and Indian worlds in January 1505 when he and his men decided to raid the borderlands east of Kabul. In recounting the march of six stages from Kabul through the Jagdalik pass to the Ningnahar region, Bābur describes his impression of the transitional zone near Adinahpur, an account that will resonate with anyone who has made the journey.

> Warm countries (*vilāyatlar*) and the Hindustan borderland (navāhīlar) had never [before] been seen. Arriving in Ni[n]gnahar another world appeared—the grasses, trees, animals, birds, people's habits and customs [were] new. There was astonishment [and] really astonishment was justified.[3]

Later in the gazetteer Bābur makes it clear that the Ningnahar country was only a transition zone, sharing some characteristics of Kabul and some of India. There he emphasizes that however great the contrast between Kabul and this *garmsīr* or warm region east of Kabul, it paled in comparison with the difference between Mawarannahr, Kabul and the territory east of the Indus. The trans-Indus

[3] BN-M, fs. 145a-b.

region is, he writes, "a strange kingdom (*gharīb mamlekat*)." "Compared to [our] countries (*vilāyatlar*)," he continues, "it is a different world."[4] Then to emphasize the point he not only cites the distinct plants, animals and people of the trans-Indus region, but says that Hindustan's mountains, rivers, jungles, deserts, villages and districts, rains and winds are also entirely different than anything his Turkī-speaking readers had ever seen or experienced. Everything, Bābur concludes, even the rocks, are fashioned "in the Hindustan manner."[5]

Bābur's survey of Hindustan is neither as complete nor as systematic as his gazetteer of Kabul and its surrounding districts, in comparison a relatively small territory he had known for a far longer period of time. His systemizing intelligence is better displayed in the Kabul section. Perhaps he simply had not been in the country long enough to acquire an encyclopedic knowledge of this kingdom. In fact he explicitly notes that this is a preliminary account, when at the end of this section he remarks that he described as much as he knew of the peoples and places of Hindustan, and says he would include additional material as he learned more.[6] His fatal illness in 1530 made this impossible, and that may also be the reason why in certain parts of the gazetteer the organization is chaotic. He probably never had time to revise this section. In any event, he does not separately describe the Panjab, the Delhi-Agra *Duab* or the Gangetic valley. Nor does he go on to elaborate on all of the categories he mentions. Readers are left wondering, for example, about the unique characteristics of India's rocks, although he may have had something in mind as simple as the prevalence of red sandstone used in buildings in and around Agra. However, he still manages to discuss an extensive range of topics, and when

[4] BN-M, f. 272a. Normally when Bābur refers to different regions he uses the term *vilāyat*. His use of *mamlakat* here is unusual and its significance unclear, although he may be using in in a political rather than a geographical sense. Vladimir Minorsky notes that in eighteenth century Iran the plural form or *mamālik* sometimes meant "realm" with the term *vilāyat* used to designate the realm's provinces. Minorsky further notes, however, that *mamālik* more often designated the state provinces as distinguished from demesne lands, and that in this usage *mamlakat* referred to one of these provinces. See Minorsky's edited translation of the Safavid administrative treatise the *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk*, 24.

[5] BN-M, fs. 272a-b.

[6] Ibid., f. 293b.

these are considered together with other comments scattered through the *Vaqā'i'* it is possible to acquire a fairly comprehensive understanding of his response to India. With this in mind Bābur's discussion of India's climate, geography, flora and fauna, computation system and revenue can be divided for convenience into three categories: the valuable, the interesting and exotic and finally, the inexplicable and offensive.

Bābur repeatedly lets his readers know that he was a reluctant conqueror and unwilling exile who would have preferred to have been ruling a Central Asian state from Samarqand or at the very least an Indo-Afghān state from Kabul. Like most other Central Asian conquerors Bābur was in India for the money or, more generally, for the staggeringly large human and material resources that the country offered. Put simply, the one thing he unreservedly admired about India was its wealth. At the beginning of the Indian gazetteer he prefaces his account of north Indian geography by remarking: "The Hindustan *mamālik*, [kingdoms or dominions] constitute a vast, populous and productive *vilāyat*, [country or province]."[7] The implicit contrast with Ferghanah or even with all of Mawarannahr must have been obvious to his audience, even if they had not already realized it from his earlier comments. Attentive readers would have recalled, for example, that while in Bābur's estimate Ferghanah generated enough income for 3-4,000 troops, he thought Ibrāhīm Lūdī's territories could support 500,000![8] In the gazetteer Bābur also explicitly points out that while Tīmūr had brought 200 stonemasons from Iran, India and elsewhere to construct his stone mosque in Samarqand, he himself had 680 stonemasons working on a single, unidentified Agra building every day. Meanwhile another 1491 masons were constructing other buildings and gardens in Agra, Bayanah, Dulpur and Gwaliar.[9]

Just a page earlier Bābur expressed himself on this subject more baldly, saying, "That which is appealing about Hindustan is that it is a large *vilāyat* with a huge [amount] of gold and silver."[10] Then to prove the point he lists the provinces under his direct or indirect control and estimates that the revenues of these conquered territo-

[7] BN-M, fs. 270a-b.
[8] BN-M, fs. 5b & 270a.
[9] BN-M, f. 291b.
[10] BN-M, f. 291a.

ries were 520 million silver *tangahs* yearly.[11] Bābur also believed that these kinds of revenue figures explained why India's numbering system included words for huge amounts, although al-Bīrūnī offers more complex religious reasons for the Hindu numbering system.[12] So after discussing the country's way of keeping time and its system of weights Bābur gives examples, telling his readers that 100,000 equaled in Indian terms, one *lac*, while 100 lacs equaled one *crore*. Then rather than confining his enumeration to these terms he also supplies the Indian words for still larger numbers. 100 *crores*, he reports, equaled one *arb* .100 *arb*s equaled one *karb*. 100 *karb*s equaled one *nil* and so forth. Using these terms Bābur's estimated revenue could be stated simply as fifty-two crores. Such figures were unimaginable in Ferghanah or Kabul.

Apart from wealth, Bābur expresses the most enthusiasm and interest for India's fauna and flora, which he describes both with great appreciation and exquisitely rendered detail. This is also the section of his memoirs that attracted the attention of his grandson, Akbar, or the painters he employed in his atelier, for natural history is the subject of the largest number of miniatures that illustrate the text of the *Vaqā'i'*. Bābur really has written a detailed zoological and botanical treatise that forms the largest section of the gazetteer and rivals the accounts of most early European naturalists. In this section too he exhibits the critical intelligence, scientific eye for the particular and refined aesthetic sense he reveals elsewhere in the *Vaqā'i'*.

In describing India's animals and plants he chooses only those not known in *vilāyatlar*, by which he seems to mean in this instance as earlier, Mawarannahr, as some of them were found in the *garmsīr* borderlands of Kabul. Bābur's account of these animals and plants reflect both his practical interests and aesthetic sense and sometimes apparently just a fascination with the exotic. It is tempting to think he took some of his elaborate descriptions from other sources, for he uses Arabic or Turkī-Arabic terminology for categories he describes except that of flowers, which are categorized simply by

[11] BN-M, f. 292a. In this section he also gives the estimated revenue for the conquered territories. He gives the figures in Persian rather than Turkī suggesting, as Beveridge also notes, that they had been supplied to him by a Persian-speaking Indian official. See also BN-B, p. 520, n. 2.

[12] Edward C. Sachau ed. and trans., *Alberuni's India* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, repr. 1996), 174-79.

the Persian *gul*. Al-Bīrūnī, for example, describes some of north India's plants and animals, but he does so in a distinctly different style than Bābur, who gives no indication of being aware of his scientific predecessor. On the other hand, Bābur does quote the name for the mango used by Amīr Khusrau, who describes it in one poem, the *Qirān al-saʿdayn*, "The Conjunction of Jupiter and Venus," and gives his own list of animals in his elaborate verse composition, *Nuh sipihr*.[13] Still Amīr Khusrau's brief descriptions do not correspond with Bābur's elaborate accounts, which are meant to inform his audience rather than, as in the poet's case, serve as examples of India's superiority to other lands.

Bābur had ample opportunity to study Indian plants and animals during his repeated forays into India since 1505 and after Panipāt, and his anecdotal descriptions show he was writing from personal experience. This is made even clearer by his occasional use of Turkī grammatical devices to indicate that either he was repeating stories told by others or that he seriously doubted what he had heard. "It is said," he writes skeptically in the reported past tense about the lime, "that it is an antidote for poison."[14] Or sometimes he explicitly expresses his doubt about reports of animal behavior, as when repeating a story about a so-called "jungle parrot," who supposedly could think as well as speak. "We believed," Bābur writes, "such a thing to be impossible." In discussing this report Bābur apparently alludes to the moment he was writing this particular section, for he says it was told to him *bu fursatah*, "at this time," by a Mongol member of his immediate retinue in Agra, Abū'l Qāsim Jalayir. After hearing the story in which a parrot is quoted as saying spontaneously in Persian, *mara wā kun, damgīr shudam*, "Uncover me, I am suffocating," Bābur quotes a stock Arabic phrase, "Let the truth rest with the teller." He then concludes in Turkī: "Not hearing with one's own ears, one cannot believe it."[15]

Bābur divides his account of India's flora and fauna into the categories: *wuhūsh*, "wild beasts," *tuyūr*, birds, *su heivānatï*, "water-animals," *nabātāt* "plants," and then *gul* "flowers." In the case of most animals and plants he comments on their practical uses as well as describing them in detail for his Turco-Mongol audience.

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[13] BN-M, f. 282b. See below, pp. 394-99, for a discussion of this poem.
[14] BN-M, f. 286b.
[15] BN-M, f. 278a.

Not surprisingly he begins his account of India's animals with the elephant, "this huge-bodied, quick-witted beast" that was a royal status symbol and heavy if cumbersome armored force of most Indian armies. He doesn't have to resort to the equivocation of reported speech in this case, as he had already begun using elephants in his own campaigns, and in the case of the elephant Bābur is primarily concerned with its practical use, rather than anatomical peculiarities. He does, though, briefly describe its trunk and tusks. After saying appreciatively "whatever is said, it understands; whatever is commanded, it does," he indicates that villagers who captured elephants had to offer them for sale to the state. He discusses their size and price, which varied directly with size, and their ability to work with their tusks. Finally, after observing how useful elephants were to the Indian people he summarizes their importance in campaigns, but ignores their combat role and describes them only as beasts of burden.

> In the [Indian] armies there are inevitably several elephants in every detachment. The elephant's good qualities are: it can easily pick up and carry large loads across broad and swift-running rivers, [and] three or four elephants can easily pull a mortar cart pulled by four to five hundred men. Yet, it has a huge appetite, equal to one [or two] strings of camels.[16]

At least there was no question of domesticating the rhinoceros, the nilgai and several varieties of deer that were common targets of the hunt, the perennial preoccupation of the Turco-Mongol military class. Bābur's description of these mammals as well as monkeys and rodents, is highlighted by his portrait of the rhinoceros, probably his finest zoological sketch, although he is nearly as evocative when discussing peacocks, parrots and dolphins in the Ganges. He tries to render the rhinoceros meaningful to his Central Asian audience through a combination of characteristically memorable detail and a comparison of its features to the horse. Alluding to his portrait of the elephant Bābur writes, "The rhinoceros is also a large animal, its bulk is perhaps that of three water buffaloes." Then citing "a well-known tale in the countries" of his readers that the rhinoceros could lift an elephant on its horn, Bābur says it is "probably false." Having dispensed with this story, he offers his own account of this

[16] BN-M, f. 275a.

animal, now long-extinct in western India but surviving in small numbers in the Brahmaputra valley.[17]

> It has one horn on the upper part of the snout, more than one *qarïsh* [hand's width]. A [horn] of more than two *qarïsh* is never seen. From one large horn there was [made] a drinking vessel, a dice-box [and] with perhaps even three to four fingers [of horn] left. Its hide is very thick. With a fully drawn, strong bow, if a good hit and good penetration [an arrow] will enter [only] four fingers [deep beneath the skin]. [However] they say that an arrow will easily pierce its hide in some places. The skin hangs loosely around both its fore and hind legs. From a distance it seems to be wrapped up in a blanket. It resembles the horse more than any other animal. [Just] as a horse does not have a large belly, its belly is also not large. [Just] as there would be a bone in the horse's ankle, so does this [animal also have such a bone. [Just] as the horse has a tibia bone, so this [animal] also has this tibia bone.
>
> [The rhinoceros] is much fiercer than the elephant, and it is not at all either obedient or submissive. There are many [of them] in the Parashawur and Hashnaghar jungles [and] there are many also in the jungles between the Indus river and Bherah district. In Hindustan there are also many along the banks of the Saru [Gogra] river. They were frequently killed during the Hindustan campaigns in the Parashawur and Hashnaghar jungles. Wielding [their] great horns they powerfully gored both men and horses during hunts. At one hunt [a rhino] with its horn threw the horse of a lad named Maqsūd a spear length. For this reason he was nicknamed Rhinoceros Maqsūd.[18]

Just as Bābur begins his account of mammals with the most interesting animal, the elephant, so he chooses the exotic peacock to introduce his account of local birds. That is his taste for symmetrical organization typified by the gazetteers is also found within this section. His portrait, unmatched in pre-colonial sources, is an exquisite description of color and physical traits of this bird, which as Bābur also notes, is even less capable of flight than the pheasant. The only thing he fails to mention is the peacock's grating call. He reasons speculatively that its inability to fly more than short distances explains why it is found primarily in the mountains and jungles. Yet this leads him to reflect that he cannot

[17] Valmik Thapar, *Land of the Tiger* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 76, 95 & 101.

[18] BN-M, fs. 275b-276a.

imagine how peacocks could thrive in such habitats frequented by jackals. He concludes by commenting on the taste of peacock meat, a theme of his other descriptions of more obvious Indian game birds, which do not include the starling and the parrot, whether rational or not. With one of his typically insightful comments Bābur says that while peacock meat is not unsavory, people still only eat it reluctantly, as is also true of the camel. He then notes for his Sunni Muslim readers that according to Hanafī law, peacock was a legitimate food for believers.

Bābur also begins the later sections with the biggest or best of each species or category he is discussing. He introduces his extensive section on birds that live near the water with a description of the huge bird he knew as the *ding*, later called in British India, the "adjutant." He mentions seeing an adjutant and some of these other birds in Kabul or eastern Afghanistan, another reminder that he is writing here primarily for a Central Asian audience. Otherwise he identifies a number of cranes and storks, ducks that are good to eat, and smaller birds like the crow, magpie, swift and the "nightingale of Hindustan" known as the *kūīl*. In each case he describes their size, physical peculiarities and coloring. Apart from the edible ducks few of these birds had any practical use. Most of this section is simply an ornithologists delight. It also serves as another example of Bābur's intellectual curiosity and encyclopedic interests.

In the remaining sections of his zoological and botanical treatise Bābur discusses aquatic animals, beginning with the alligator, crocodile and dolphin, and plants. He prefers the mango to any other Indian fruit and flowers, and among flowers, the hibiscus is given pride of place. He mentions the two standard ways of eating the mango taught to children and newcomers to India, mash it up and suck the juice through a hole or peel it like a peach.[19] Most of the section on plants is devoted to fruits, in which he describes their taste as carefully and if possible, as comparatively as he paints a verbal picture of the plumages of birds. Based on Bābur's preoccupation with gardens and his use of the garden he built near Adinahpur as an early agricultural experiment station for South Asian crops, it is impossible to ignore the likelihood that he was

[19] BN-M, f. 282b.

thinking of cultivating many of these fruits himself. Readers are reminded of this possibility also because in the *Vaqā'i'* narrative for the period of June and July 1529, about the time Bābur probably wrote this section, he mentions harvesting melons and grapes from his Hasht Bihisht or "Eight Paradise" garden in Agra.[20]

Indicative both of Bābur's intellectual taste for categorization and practical interest in edible fruits is his elaborate discussion of the "orange and orange-like fruits." In it he describes seven fruits that seem to belong to this species, although among them he lists two types of limes. Interestingly the Hindustan *nāranje*s he describes are all found in three *garmsīr* districts, Lamghanat, Bajaur and Swat [Sawat], the transitional region between Kabul and the Indus. He says that:

> 'Lamghanat oranges are smaller, navel oranges, very fine, delicate and juicy, not at all like Khurasan oranges. It is due to their delicacy that when bringing [them] from Lamghanat to Kabul, a distance of thirteen or fourteen yighāch, some oranges go bad. [Whereas] they send Astarabad oranges with less damage to Samarqand, which is 270 to 280 *yighāch*, because of the thickness of their skin and the small amount of their juice. The Bajaur orange is larger than a quince, very juicy and its juice is more bitter than other oranges.[21]

Bābur then repeats a story of his old companion, Khwājah Kalān, by then in Kabul, who "said we counted the oranges taken from one tree of this species in Bajaur, and it amounted to 7,000." Perhaps his friend referred to the entire season's crop—even so. Leaving this dubious story without comment Bābur concludes with a linguistic aside, the equivalent of one of his many learned footnotes, in the first person, "It had always seemed to me that the pronunciation of word *nāranj* was an Arabic usage. It seems this is so for the Bajaur and Swat people all call the *nāranj*, *narang* [the Indian and Persian pronunciation]."[22]

Finally, Bābur describes four Indian flowers not known to his Central Asian audience: the hibiscus, oleander, screw-pine and special variety of jasmine, *yāsman*, which is "larger and more strongly scented than the jasmines in our place."[23] As in the case

[20] BN-M, f. 380b.

[21] BN-M, fs. 286a-b. Astarabad is an Iranian city at the southeastern tip of the Caspian Sea. Soucek, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, 239-42.

[22] BN-M, f. 286b. The letter "g" is not found in Arabic.

[23] Here rather than simply using *vilāyat* or *vilayātlar*, Bābur's common term for his homeland, he writes: *bizing yer*, literally "our place."

of fruits he probably was thinking of ways these plants could be grown in his gardens. Here, though, Bābur offers a strictly aesthetic appreciation, but one rendered with his usual care. He notes that the oleander, for example, is both red and white and then compares it to the peach, a fruit his Central Asian audience knew well.

> "Like the peach it has five petals. The red oleander resembles the peach flower, but the oleander has fourteen or fifteen flowers blossoming in one place [which] from a distance have the appearance of one large flower....[Like the hibiscus] it both blooms frequently and profusely during the monsoons and is found most of the year.[24]

Weather, Landscape and Customs

The weather immediately following India's monsoon rains is one of the few other aspects of Indian life for which Bābur expresses appreciation. He loathed nearly everything else about its climate and virtually every other aspect of its environment and society. His implicit standard was the climate of Kabul or Samarqand, made more understandable, perhaps, by the remarks of the English geologist, W. Rickmer Rickmers, who wrote of Samarqand in 1913, "I certainly prefer the climate of Samarqand to that of any place I know in Europe," and then elaborates:

> The sun cuts silhouettes into the land and fetches a wealth of colour out of it; the faintest tint is distinct from its nearest gradation, everything which can shine, glimmers and glitters. Coupled with this sharp light is the penetrating dryness with desiccates the body and stimulates the brain....The day of the steppe knows not that state of weariness and lassitude, that sultry oppression apt to undermine the energy of the strongest character, that tropical moisture ready to destroy the sensations of pleasure and hope.[25]

Remarking that "the monsoon airs are very good," and "wonderfully fine" when the rain ceases, Babur writes that at this time "the weather's healthfulness and pleasantness cannot be equaled."[26] However, he also offers his readers the critical information that their bows could not be used in the monsoons, because the air is *pur*

[24] BN-M, fs. 287b-288a.
[25] Rickmers, *The Duab of Turkistan*, 138-39.
[26] BN-M, f. 291a.

nam, "very damp." The bows could not even be drawn in that weather without breaking. This was one of several reasons why campaigns were usually suspended during the rainy season. He also tells them that everything suffers during the rains, although he does not include in this his own health. "Armor, book, household goods and cloth are also affected. [Even] a building," he writes "does not last long," implicitly contrasting the short life of mud-brick structures in India with those of Mawarannahr, where the rainfall is very scant.[27] However, apart from the monsoons Bābur, like virtually every émigré and member of the indigenous population suffered in the north Indian climate. Alluding apparently to his earlier complaint about the oppressive weather in Agra in the months immediately after Panipat, he writes, "We were oppressed by three things in Hindustan: first by its heat, then by its strong wind and also by its dust."[28]

In fact, as he makes clear in other comments scattered throughout the Indian gazetteer, he was oppressed by more than three things in the Indian physical and social environment. Oppressed is too strong a word for some of his reactions, as he shows by his description of Indian topography and the agricultural environment. His reaction to the landscape seems a mixture of simple homesickness and affronted aesthetic sensibilities. Implicitly contrasting the north Indian plain with his homeland, Bābur expresses an exile's disappointment with the unrelenting flatness of the terrain and the lack of the *arïqs* or irrigation channels he was used to seeing in Mawarannahr. "India's cities and provinces," he writes, "are very unpleasant (*asrū bisafā*)."[29]

> Most of Hindustan's provinces are located in flat areas. In so many cities and so many provinces there is no flowing water. Only rivers have flowing waters. In some places there is still water. [Even] in some cities where *arïqs* could be dug to bring water, it is not brought.[30]

Never mind that the alluvial Ferghanah valley is nearly as flat; at least it is ringed with mountains.

In implying that he missed seeing the irrigation channels common both to Mawarannahr and Kabul, Bābur still explains why he

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27 BN-M, fs. 291a-b.
28 BN-M, f. 300a.
29 BN-M, f. 274a.
30 BN-M, f. 273b.

thought Indians never dug them, even when they easily could. The explanation, he suggests, is that fall crops were watered by the monsoon rains. The monsoons also explained, he thought, why Indian villagers could abandon one site and quickly reestablish another settlement elsewhere. They had no need to dig irrigation channels or build dams, and for their own water could dig wells. They also had ready supplies of grass and wood to build houses. Still Bābur indicates that some Indian crops were in fact irrigated, and contrasts the Persian wheel used for this purpose in the Panjab with what he contemptuously describes as a clumsy and filthy method used around Agra and Bayanah. In the latter area, Bābur reports, a bullock drew water from wells using a rope that dragged through the animal's dung and urine as it descended back into the well. In this area, he remarks in implied astonishment, men and women sometimes carried water to crops in jugs. He must have found this custom needlessly cumbersome, considering that the water could have been raised by Persian wheels and carried to the fields in *ariqs* that he has just mentioned.

Bābur's negative reaction to India's tedious landscape and backward and unsanitary irrigation techniques is, however, far overshadowed by his dismissive, utterly contemptuous response to Indian culture and society. His account of Indian, that is Hindu social life and cultural attributes is, first of all, surprisingly brief and brutally dismissive. The essence of his critique is contained in two short passages. First he gives a surprisingly perfunctory account of Hindu society, surprising given the care he has just lavished on India's flora and fauna. Its brevity recalls the account that the fourteenth century North African traveler, Ibn Battuta, accords the majority of India's inhabitants as he traveled to and from Delhi.[31] Yet, whereas Ibn Battuta scarcely acknowledges the existence of non-Muslims, Bābur at least describes a few pertinent aspects of Hindu society before ridiculing and dismissing it. It might be possible to attribute the intensity of his reaction to his unfamiliarity with a people among whom he had spent so little time, but he had probably encountered Hindu merchants even while in Ferghanah and certainly met many Hindus and other non-Muslim Indians in Afghanistan and the Panjab after 1504. His feelings cannot be

[31] Gibb ed. and trans., *The Travels of Ibn Battūta A. D. 1325-1354* III, see especially Chapter X.

dismissed, therefore, as a simple function of ignorance. His response reflects deeply held values that reveal the profound cultural divide between his world and India.

After noting that the majority of India's people are Hindus, who believe in reincarnation, Bābur's subsequent description of Hindu society is remarkable for its brevity and selectivity. He ignores the existence of religious and aristocratic castes, brahmans and rajahs. The latter omission is especially curious given his personal familiarity with the Rajput lineages who controlled the great arc of territory to his west and innumerable Rajput-dominated villages within his own territories. Instead Bābur mentions by profession only three groups of Hindus: "artisans, workers and officials," perhaps because he had dealt most often with individuals from these groups in his settlement and beautification projects. In fact, other than noting that Hindus exclusively performed these occupations Bābur says nothing more about any other Hindus, except to note two interesting social characteristics about those who were sedentary. They all had *qabīlah*, lineage or "tribal" names, he reports, whereas in the *vilāyatlar*, only steppe dwellers had such names, and Hindus passed down their customs from father to father. The latter custom cannot have seemed very unusual to his readers, despite the social mobility within Turco-Mongol armies. However, in saying that village and town dwellers were identified by lineage rather than simply as someone's father or son, wife or daughter, Bābur was evidently referring to caste identities.

Unlike many foreign observers he does not explicitly discuss the pollution restrictions that distinguished and separated Hindu society from his own. In the one paragraph, though, he indirectly denounces what he considers to be the most pernicious effects of those restrictions in his comprehensive litany of complaints. In this famous, oft-quoted but habitually unexplained passage he defines the social and cultural boundaries that separated his world from Hindu India, although given his publicized contempt for Afghāns the target of his critique may not always be absolutely clear. Some of his criticisms deal with fundamental values that made the boundaries between the two societies seem an unbridgeable chasm rather than a tricky but ultimately fordable stream. Others are relatively superficial, reflecting an intense homesickness. Introducing his passage by reminding his readers that "Hindustan is a place of little elegance," *kam latāfat*, Bābur continues:

> The people of Hindustan have no beauty; they have no convivial society, no social intercourse, no character or genius, no urbanity, no nobility or chivalry. In the skilled arts and crafts there is no regularity, proportionality, straightness or rectangularity. There are no good horses, there are no good dogs, no grapes, muskmelons or first-rate fruits, no ice or cold water, no good bread or cooked food in the bāzārs, no hammāms, no madrasahs, no candles, no torches, or candlesticks.[32]

Apart from the opening remark, which apparently reflects simple racial prejudice, Bābur begins his litany of complaints with one of the things he found most offensive about Indian society, saying Indians did not enjoy "convivial society and social intercourse," *ikhtilāt u amīzesh, ve āmad u raft.* Few things could have bothered him more than a society based on values fundamentally antagonistic to those exemplified in the Tīmūrid symposium, the *suhbat ve suhbatārāyalïq*. The phrase *ikhtilāt u amīzesh* connotes conversation, social intercourse and friendship, while *āmad u raft* , literally "coming and going," refers to the exchange of visits between social equals. In castigating Indian society for lacking these traits, Bābur was presumably referring to the impossibility of social gatherings in a society divided into castes, where the exclusivity of temple worship was paralleled by the severely restricted nature of social intercourse. In making this complaint Bābur was not alone. He both echoed and prefaced the reaction of earlier and later visitors and émigrés to India who found the social isolation there simultaneously puzzling and offensive. Bābur may mention the lack of *hammāms* and *madrasahs* for the same reason and in doing so he must be referring to non-Muslim Indian society. They were communal institutions that symbolized the fundamental differences between Muslim and Hindu communities,

One of the oldest recorded examples of an outsider's stunned reaction to brahmanical society is that of Megasthenes, the Seleucid-Greek ambassador to the Mauryan court at Patna in the central Gangetic valley in the third century B.C. He is said to have remarked about Indian social isolation: "...other things they do which one cannot approve: for instance, that they eat always alone, and that they have no fixed hours when meals are to be taken by all in common, but each one eats when he feels inclined. The

[32] BN-M, f. 290b.

contrary custom would be better for ends of social and civil life."[33] Pollution restrictions did not, of course, allow the kind of civic life this Greek visitor had in mind. Megasthenes only noted what modern Indian anthropologists have commented on at greater length, noting that "Eating alone, as the normative Hindu system makes clear, is a morally meaningful activity. It is a dialogue of responsibility towards one's own self."[34] In Mediterranean, Central Asian, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures sharing meals was and is a fundamental social ritual, which often defined the boundaries of the religious, ethnic or social community. Not sharing meals astonished nearly all new arrivals to India, from ancient to modern times. Dictated by the religious tenets of orthodox brahmanism, it is a good example of the distinct value system that made the boundaries between Hindu and Muslim society seem to Bābur and others virtually impassable.

The remainder of Bābur's complaints in this passage show he found little else to admire in Indians, even had they shared meals with each other or with him and his companions. Coming from a man so perceptive in other ways his verbal drumbeat of criticisms seems surprising, especially in view of his limited exposure to non-Muslim society. In so far as one can tell from his memoirs Bābur had little contact with Hindus, apart from issuing orders to stone masons and revenue collectors. He never mentions any social contact with Rajput princes, not to speak of brahman scholars. All the gatherings he describes in the Indian section of the *Vaqā'i'* are social replicas of earlier Turco-Mongol encounters, except for their increasing ceremonial or imperial character.

Just the severely limited nature of his non-Muslim contacts may have encouraged him to report to his readers with such assurance and sense of cultural superiority that Indians had no *tab' u idrāk*, no "character or genius," no *adab*, no urbanity, and no *karam u marūwat*, no "nobility or chivalry." His invocation of *adab,* the well-bred, belletristic politesse, is the most obvious reference to the sophisticated Iranized court culture acquired by men such as his maternal grandfather, Yūnas Khan, during the long years of his Iranian exile from the Mongol ulus. As recounted by Haydar Mīrzā, Yūnas

[33] J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (Calcutta: Chuckervetty, Chatterjee & Co. 1926), 69.

[34] R. S. Khare, *The Hindu Hearth and Home* (Delhi: Vikas, 1976), 263 n. 1.

Khan was an "accomplished and outstanding khan of the Chaghatay race:

> Possessed of splendid qualities, he was arrayed with virtues such as [being] a fluent reader of the Quran, [having] a temperate nature, [and being] a good conversationalist. He was skilled in enigmas, calligraphy and painting and other things consistent with a sound nature. He was well-trained in instrumental music and singing....[35]

Yūnas Khan was also, Haydar Mīrzā concludes, a talented conqueror and ruler, a valorous hero and exceptional archer. Perhaps when all these qualities were combined together in one individual he would have been in Bābur's mind the "perfect man" of the Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic aristocratic class. And when he lamented the lack of such men in north India, Bābur may have had in mind Afghāns as much as Hindus.

If in his opening verbal assault on Indian society Bābur meant to inform his readers that India utterly lacked the symposium culture and civilized individuals he valued so highly, his next sentence is part of a broader litany of complaints that in India it was also impossible to find the proper symposium environment. When he says that there is no "regularity, proportionality, straightness or rectangularity," *siyāq ve andām ve rajah ve gūnyā yoq*, Bābur is not referring solely or even principally to small crafts offered for sale in the bāzārs. As his earlier and later critical asides about India make clear, he has in mind the lack of geometrically planned gardens and water palaces of the type he ordered constructed in Agra and Dulpur.[36] Part of this is connected to his complaint there was no running water in India apart from the rivers. When saying this he wasn't thinking just of the agricultural system and its lack of canals, but probably more of clear, running water bisecting geometrically planned gardens. Bābur mentions that just a few days after arriving in Agra in 1526 and having found India "unpleasant and disorderly," he started searching for a suitable garden site. He tells his readers that "Wherever human habitation is possible, water should be made to flow with wheels and planned and regular spaces should

[35] TR-T, fs. 61b-62.

[36] Bābur is presumably referring to Hindu landscapes, since the Sultans of Delhi had constructed formal Islamic gardens. See Anthony Welch, "Gardens that Bābur Did Not Like: Landscape, Water, and Architecture for the Sultans of Delhi," in *Mughal Gardens* James L. Westcoat Jr. and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn ed. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 59-93.

be built."[37] Despite what he says about the ugliness and unsuitability of the countryside around Agra, he built a *hammām*, pool and garden, thus "introducing regular, [well] designed gardens in unpleasant, irregular India."[38]

Bābur's mention of *gūnyā*, or rectangularity, as one of the qualities he found wanting in India, is a reminder of the degree to which he had absorbed Greco-Persian norms of symmetry and proportion. *Gūnyā* is a Greek term that he may have learned from the Harat landscape architect, Mīrak-i Sayyid Ghiyās, who like so many other Tīmūrid refugees, fled to India. He arrived in the country a year before Bābur's death.[39] Greek geometrical vocabulary had been absorbed into Islamic culture during the ʿAbbasid caliphate, either indirectly from Sasanid sources or directly from Greek translations. In the ninth century, for example, Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) wrote an instructional text for government officials in which he gave pride of place to geometry:

> In addition to my works [which provide linguistic, literary and linguistic training], it is indispensible...to study geometrical figures for the measurement of land in order that he can recognize a right, acute, and an obtuse triangle and the heights of triangles, the different types of quadrangles, arcs and other circular figures, and perpendicular lines, in order that he can test his knowledge in practice on the land.[40]

By the tenth century the *muhandis*, an Iranian term for a geometer/engineer, was known as the professional who plotted courses or irrigation channels, and presumably also the well-ordered streams that flowed through gardens.[41] One such man may be depicted in one of the miniature paintings done to accompany the late fifteenth century translation of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. It shows a man holding a grid plan while he directs construction on Bābur's garden at Adinahpur.[42]

[37] BN-M, f. 299b.

[38] BN-M, f. 300a.

[39] Maria Subtelny, "Agriculture and the Timurid *Chahārbāgh*: the Evidence from a Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual," in Attilio Petruccioli ed., *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires*, 112-13.

[40] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), 111.

[41] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* 112-13. In contrast to the immediately practical uses of geometry ʿUmar Khayyām developed a field known as "Algebraic Geometry." See R. Rashed and B. Vahabzadeh ed., *Omar Khayyam the Mathematician* (N.Y., N.Y.: Biblioteca Persica, 2000), 7 passim.

[42] Pictured in Subtelny, "Agriculture and the Timurid Chahārbāgh: the Evi-

However, Bābur's absorption of geometrical norms extended far beyond the garden or the house—and home designs in India he also found sorely inchoate. His appreciation of a natural prospect, his Tīmūrid gaze, was intensified when he saw nature seemingly conforming to the geometrical norms of landscape architecture. These norms were replicated, of course, in miniature painting representations of garden scenes.

When writing, for example, of a *maʿjūn*-induced high he experienced at one of his "entertainments" in March 1519, Bābur appreciatively recalls how spring flowers on a hillside were apparently arranged geometrically. "Sitting near the camp on a small rise, we enjoyed the flowers. As if designed, there were below on the sides of the hill now yellow, now red flowers blossoming in rows in a hexagonal shape."[43] It was later that year, in November 1519, while touring the autumn harvest, that Bābur and his men noticed "an apple sapling whose sear, yellow leaves on each branch were regularly arranged in fives or sixes just in such a way that if painters had made every effort to copy it they would not have been able to do so."[44] In describing this latter scene he seems to exemplify the psychology of art, in which a painter teaches viewers to appreciate the beauty of a scene then conditions their future response to nature, the original source of the artist's inspiration. Bābur himself may have learned to assume that painters tried to reproduce proportional, geometrically balanced scenes from examples of Tīmūrid miniature painting, an art many believe "to have been created on the same underlying canon of proportional harmonies as was Tīmūrid architecture."[45] He knew the work of the Harat school of miniature painters especially well, and critiques two artists, including Bihzad, the outstanding artist of the late Tīmūrid period.[46]

Bābur applies the same aesthetic standards he uses to evaluate

dence from a Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual," 125. Also cited prominently in Welch, "Gardens that Bābur Did Not Like: Landscape, Water, and Architecture for the Sultans of Delhi," 59. The painting is discussed at length by J. L. Westcoat, Jr., "Picturing an Early Mughal Garden," *Asian Art* 2 (1989), 59-79.

[43] BN-M, fs. 232a-b.

[44] BN-M, f. 248a.

[45] Eleanor Sims, "Painting in Timurid Iran," 67.

[46] BN-M, fs. 181b-182a.

India's landscape to critique its buildings. In general, as he says in the gazetteer, he thought they lacked "charm, airiness, proportionality and regularity."[47] Only on one occasion does he actually criticize specific buildings, in a passage from a later section of the *Vaqā'i'* in which he describes his tour of the important Hindu kingdom of Gwaliar in the fall of 1528. Vikramaditya, the last independent rajah of the Tomar dynasty had died at Panipat fighting with Ibrāhīm, who had conquered Gwaliar in 1523, forcing the Rajah into vassalage. Bābur thought that the buildings of Vikramaditya and his predecessor Man Singh (r.1486-1516) he saw within Gwaliar fort were *gharīb*, "peculiar" or "strange" and *lökpalök ve bīsīyāq*, "ponderous and irregular.[48] A life lived outside or in airy arched Tīmūrid pavilions would not have prepared him to value the heavier, lower and darker stone structures of Hindu India. Nonetheless, despite beginning his description with a negative aesthetic response, in the remainder of his Gwaliar survey Bābur is neither contemptuous nor dismissive, but curious.

He implicitly praises Man Singh's palace and describes without comment the imposing eighth century Telī kā Mandir temple,[49] which he mentions, could be seen from Dulpur. Bābur sometimes remarks, fairly, on the "airless" "dark" interiors of certain palace rooms, and in the garden of a temple complex he observed what he describes as a "very squat, unsymmetrical" wooden pavilion with "tasteless porticos in the Hindūstānī mode" at the garden doors.[50] Surprisingly, though, he seemed to appreciate some Gwaliar temples, but only when they resembled buildings from his own society, thus comparing their porches, tall domes and interior rooms to *madrasahs*.[51] Bābur did not, however, appreciate the nearby Jain statues, whose naked exposure of genitalia he ordered to be destroyed and which, perhaps for prurient interests, are represented

[47] BN-M, f. 291a.

[48] BN-M, f. 340b. The history and monuments of Gwalior fort and nearby region are discussed by Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, *Gwalior Fort* (Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1984) and B. D. Misra, *Forts and Fortresses of Gwalior and Its Hinterland* (Delhi: Manohar, 1993).

[49] An informative study of Gwalior temple architecture is Michael D. Willis, *Temples of Gopaksetra* (London: British Museum, 1997). See especially plates 84-88 for photographs of the Telī kā Mandir temple.

[50] Ibid., fs. 341a-b.

[51] Ibid., f. 343a.

in the miniature of Gwaliar included in Akbar's illustrated text of the *Vaqā'i'*.[52]

If India's social and aesthetic values were fundamentally opposed to his own, Bābur also showed in his indictment of India what might be described as his more petty human side. When he complained about the lack of commodities that any Central Asian Muslim would assume to be readily available to him, Bābur seems to be giving vent to the common frustration that travelers over the centuries have felt when visiting new lands. It is one thing to appreciate exoticism, but what about the comforts and familiar institutions of home? Turco-Mongol aristocrats, after all, required good horses and dogs for warfare and hunting. They expected to find the fruits they knew, a longing that became inculcated in later members of the dynasty who had been born in India, but taught to find the country wanting in this and other ways. In Bābur's mind at least the mango did not compensate for the delicious fruits of Kabul and Samarqand. Then finally Bābur mentions that along with hammāms and madrasahs India also lacked candles, torches and candlesticks.

This last complaint seems inexplicable if he had not earlier described what he felt to be the repulsive way in which "great men" in India would illumine their night gatherings, using "dirty" servants called *diwatīs* or *deoti*s, who carried a crude type of oil lamp, rather than torches or candles. Bābur's seemingly visceral distaste for this custom was equaled by one final aspect of Indian society that he like later Europeans found offensive, the fact that "common people" of India walked around nearly naked. Expressing his shock at the ways Indians dressed, which for some Central Asian or Iranian Muslims was a prurient delight, Bābur describes the common male dhoti and the simple female sari, both uncut pieces of cloth.[53] What he calls in Persian terms the *lungī*, hung, he says, just below the naval and then was passed between the legs and tied behind. He uses the same term for what became when worn by women, the sari, part of which was tied around the waist, while the second half was thrown over the head. It is perhaps fortunate that someone with his sensibilities did not conquer Kerala, in the extreme south-

[52] BN-M, fs. 342a-b.

[53] See for example Mahmūd ibn Amīr Walī Balkhī, *The Bahr al-Asrār* Riazul Islam ed. (Karachi: University of Karachi, Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, 1980).

west, where none of the population in the region's tropical climate went clothed above the waist before the colonial period.

Civilized Standards: the vilāyatlar

When Bābur was writing his Indian critique he had Samarqand, Harat and to a lesser extant Kabul in mind as standards for measuring the quality of civilized life. He had already completed his sections on those cities and their environs when he came to the Indian gazetteer. While he does not allude to the Tīmūrid cities in the gazetteer, no reader of the *Vaqā'i'* could fail to notice that they provided the physical environment and congenial *adabī* society he prized. Careful readers might even remember that in his effusive description of Samarqand he praises the bakeries and cooked food found in the city's superb bāzārs and the wonderful fruit grown in its suburbs and surrounding districts. The way Bābur describes Samarqand and Harat, each great Tīmūrid city provides the implicit comparison for one of the two most fundamental elements of his Indian critique. His account of Samarqand focuses on the physical environment of the city, its buildings, gardens, suburbs and surrounding districts, although he does briefly mention that the Samarqand region was the home to many of the Muslim world's great scholars, most notably Muhammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, the fifteenth century author of the *Sahīh Bukhārī*.[54] Surprisingly when he comes to describe Harat he merely lists the many buildings, tombs, gates and bridges he visited—many more than were found in Samarqand—and concentrates instead on the cataloguing the city's aristocracy and learned men and recalling the elegant gatherings he attended there. It is only a matter of guesswork why Bābur chose to write so selectively about these cities, although his different approach may reflect the age and conditions when he visited them and perhaps also the kind of sources he had access to for each one. His interesting decision not to describe Harat's grand buildings may reflect his lack of intimate knowledge of the city or

[54] BN-M, f. 45a. The great collection of *hadith*, widely regarded as the most authentic collection of reports of the actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and therefore one of the most important source books of Islamic law. In the late 1990's an elaborate shrine was built to commemorate Bukhārī just outside of Samarqand.

his awareness that the historian Isfizārī had already done so, although that does not explain why he still chose to list many of the city's famous poets and theologians, information that was also available in Isfizārī's work and elsewhere.

There is in any case no doubt about Bābur's opinion of Samarqand, whose longitude and latitude he even supplies, based upon the astronomical tables compiled under Ulugh Beg Mīrzā in the first half of the fifteenth century. "*Rubʿ-i maskūn-da*," (In the inhabited quarter (of the world))," Bābur writes, "There are few such fine cities."[55] Based then on the discussion that follows, the criteria for a fine city were in his mind principally three: splendid buildings, beautiful gardens, and excellent bāzārs. In addition he admired two other things about Samarqand's hinterland, its lush meadows and productive outlying districts. If for the fourteenth century Indo-Persian poet Amīr Khusrau, India was paradise on earth, for Bābur it must have been Samarqand, a city that he writes of with affecting warmth and unrestrained delight. If after absorbing Bābur's litany of complaints about Hindustan a reader would reread the brief Samarqand gazetteer, he would discover a nostalgic memory of a place for which no amount of Indian coin seemed adequate compensation.

The buildings and gardens Bābur admired were those constructed by Tīmūr himself, his grandson, Ulugh Beg Mīrzā and some of their *amīr*s within the city walls and beyond in the adjoining *mahallāt* or neighborhoods. He does not often say that they had *andām ve siyāq*, "proportionality and regularity," that is implied by his critique of Indian buildings—and by his unstinting praise for those in Samarqand. Nonetheless, Bābur characterizes virtually every one of Tīmūr and Ulugh Beg's structures as *besyār ʿālī imārʿat,* "very sublime buildings." In Tīmūr's case this included the Kök Saray, the large four story *kushk* or kiosk built in the *ark* or citadel; never mind its ominous reputation as the place where people were taken for execution. Buildings such as these undoubtedly had the *hawā* or airiness that Bābur found so wanting in Gwaliar. Otherwise Bābur admired Tīmūr's stone mosque, built with captive Indian stonemasons following Tīmūr's 1398 campaign, an unusual building in that most royal and religious structures in Mawarannahr were built with baked brick and faced with tile. This was the second

[55] BN-M, f. 44b.

of Tīmūr's "very sublime buildings," featuring a Quranic calligraphic inscription that could be read from a *kurūh*, a distance of about two miles, typical of Tīmūr's taste for architectural excess. The mosque was one of two architectural reminders of Tīmūr's Indian raid that Bābur would have known from his three brief occupations of Samarqand.

As for Ulugh Beg's buildings, Bābur mentions a madrasah and *khānagāh* or sufi hospice, with a large dome, so large that its equal could hardly be found elsewhere in the world. Adjoining these building was a *hammām*, thus completing an architectural ensemble of communal buildings such as Bābur missed seeing in India. And just as the *khānagāh* had its towering dome, the bath was distinguished by a floor made from all types of stone, so that no bath like it, he argues, was known in Khurasan or Samarqand [province]. Near the *madrasah* Ulugh Beg had evidently built a mosque, decorated with pieces of wood arranged in a curved rhythmic pattern, what Bābur characterizes as *khatā'ī naqshlar* or Chinese designs. He reports that the *qiblah* or niche indicating the direction of Mecca in this building was different from that of the *madrasah*, probably, he thought, because this *qiblah* was determined by *munajjim tarīqī* or "astronomical methods."[56] These were calculated in the next "sublime building" Bābur mentions, Ulugh Beg's three story observatory located on nearby Kuhak hill. At this observatory Ulugh Beg's scientists had calculated the *Zīj al-Gurkhanī*, literally the "Tīmūrid tables," that by Bābur's time had superseded the calculations done at the Mongol observatory at Maraghah by Nāsir al-Dīn Tūsī, the thirteenth century scholar and scientist.[57] If Bābur's emphasis on the unique characteristics of other Tīmūrid buildings in Samarqand sometimes seems the product of excessive nostalgia, it is impossible to fault his understanding of the significance of this observatory. Bābur's citation of coordinates from Ulugh Beg's tables to locate Samarqand and reference to their use in locating the *qiblah*, suggest that his own taste for geometric symmetry and

[56] BN-M, f. 46b.

[57] In fact along with his fellow Iranian and Central Asian scholars Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī and 'Umar Khayyām, one of the outstanding scientists of the "medieval" Islamic world. Muhammed 'Alī Amir Moezzi, H. Daiber and F. J. Ragep, "al-Tūsī," Muhammad B. al-Hasan b. 'Alī Abū Dja'far (1201-74), EI2, Fasc. 175-6, 745-52. Tūsī, a student or disciple of Ibn Sīnā, studied in 'Umar Khayyām's native city of Nishapur between 1213 and 1221.

quantification was merely one indicator of a scientifically-inclined intellect that is also manifested in his categorization of plants and animals and skepticism about articulate monkeys and other local miracles.

Apart from such buildings, Bābur waxes lyrical about Samarqand's gardens, some of which, in his opinion, contained their own "sublime buildings." Tīmūr he reports, built two of these east of the city, one near the observatory, another near the *ark*, and two "below" the city. The one Bābur remembered either well or fondly enough to describe in detail was the *Bāgh-i Dilkushā* or "Sweetheart-Garden." He appreciated the avenue lined with flanking rows of poplar trees that joined the garden to Samarqand's Turquoise Gate, and recalled that Tīmūr's Indian campaign was commemorated with paintings in the large kiosk built within the garden. Of Ulugh Beg's two gardens Bābur was especially taken with the *Bāgh-i Maidān*, the Garden of the Field or Square on the slope of Kuhak hill, within which was built a "sublime building" known as the *chihil sutūn*, or "forty-columns."[58] The two-story building was flanked by four towers, "like minarets," through which one climbed to the second floor, where there were four open galleries, the kind of symmetrical but open-air setting that so appealed to Bābur and other Tīmūrids. Nearby was another smaller garden with two buildings, one of them a four-door structure known as the *Chīnī-khānah*, or "porcelain-house" because it was full of porcelain "a person" had brought from China.[59] Presumably the porcelain had been brought by one or more of several Chinese missions to the Tīmūrids, the first of which arrived in Samarqand in 1395. Others reached Harat in 1409, 1412 and 1417. A mission from Harat to Beijing arrived in the Chinese capital in 1421.[60] Porcelain was only

[58] In Safavid Isfahan a similarly named building has twenty actual columns that are visually doubled in a reflecting pool. Bābur mentions no such pool here nor the number of actual columns in the building.

[59] BN-M, fs. 47a-b.

[60] For these missions and the routes to and from Harat and China see A. B. Buriev, "Svedeniya Hafiz-i Abru O vzaimootnosheniyakh Sredneī Azii S Kitaem v XV v" B. A. Litvinskii ed., *Iz Istorii Sredneī Azii i Vostochnogo Turkistana* XV-XIX vv. (Tashkent: "Fan," 1937), 24-37. Yolande Crowe, "Some Timurid Designs and Their Far Eastern Connections," in Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny ed., *Timurid Art and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 169-70. There was also a *Chīnī-khānah* in Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī's Gāzur Gāh garden at Harāt, the burial site of the poet Ansārī. Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Ca.:

the most tactile evidence of pervasive Chinese influence on Timurid painting and decorative arts—as exemplified by the designs on Ulugh Beg's mosque.[61] In a long-term historical perspective such contacts were not surprising. Han Chinese missions had reached Balkh in northern Afghanistan in the second century B.C., and during the late Sasanid and early Islamic period a constant flow of merchants and goods linked Iran and Central Asia with T'ang dynasty China.[62]

Even considering all these wonderful kiosks and gardens of Tīmūr and Ulugh Beg, the garden Bābur praises most highly was one of the many built by Tīmūrid *amīr*s, just as Bābur's *beg*s were to replicate his along the river near Agra. He singles out a *chārbāgh* built by Darvīsh Muhammad Tarkhan in Sultan Ahmad Mīrzā's time on the slope below the *Bāgh-i Maidān*. Based upon the vocabulary of his description this garden, more than any other in the city or its neighborhoods, represented the ideal landscape architecture he found so wanting in India. "Out of all the large and small gardens of the greater and lesser *beg*s:

> There were few equal to the *chārbāgh* of Muhammad Tarkhan in *safālīq*, *havālīq* and *maddnazarlīq*, (charm, airiness and perspective.) The *chārbāgh* is placed lower than the *Bāgh-i Maidān* on a height overhanging the Qulbah meadow. The entire meadow lies at its feet. In the *chārbāgh* lovely *narwān*, cypresses and poplars have been planted *bileh siyāq*, "with regularity" in rows. This is a perfect "mansion." Its defect is that there is no large stream.[63]

If all these sentences, excepting the last, were turned into negatives you would have Bābur's critique of north India's physical environment and its architecture: flat terrain, which thus lacked the perspective of height, airless, irregular buildings and lack of gardens

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Mazda, 1987), 12. Cited by G. A. Bailey, "The Dynamics of Chinoiserie in Timurid and Early Safavid Ceramics," in Golombek and Subtelny ed., *Timurid Art and Architecture*, 189. In the seventeenth century the Qutb Shāhī rulers of the Deccan sultanate of Golconda constructed a garden with a "Chīnī Khānah," the ruins of which still stand. See the photographs in Ali Akbar Husain's, *Scent in the Islamic Garden* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), figures 18 and 19 and pp. 19-23.

[61] Lentz and Lowrey, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, see especially 187, 192-95 and 231-32.

[62] The latter contacts and goods exchanged are described by Edward H. Schaeffer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley: University of California Press, repr. 1985).

[63] BN-M, f. 47b.

with geometrically planned spaces, much less graceful kiosks. What this garden and all of Hindustan also needed were streams, not so much natural waterways as channels directed from existing rivers, the *arïq*s of a well-irrigated landscape.

It wasn't just that Samarqand had such gardens, as well as beautiful religious and communal structures, an admirable bazar, good cooked food and delicious fruit. Around the city were excellent meadows, where armies could camp and find fodder for their horses; one meadow east-northeast of the city called Kan-i Gul was a royal hunting preserve. Bābur's later description of Kabul's meadows in his gazetteer of that city reflects this same interest in the ability of the city to support large numbers of grazing horses. Beyond the immediate limits of Samarqand Bābur described its outlying *vilāyats* and *tuman*s. Among these he included the city of Bukhara, a "fine city" itself with many fruits, excellent melons and the strongest wines in Mawarannahr. "At the time of wine-drinking in Samarqand," Bābur writes of his third and last occupation of the city, "I drank wines."[64] Another *vilāyat* just south of Samarqand was Tīmūr's birthplace of Kish or Shahr-i sabz, the "Green city," so named because of the region's lush springtime growth.

As Tīmūr had once thought to make Kish his capital he had also erected "fine buildings" there, including the kind of tall, arched structures that Bābur seemed to so admire and find wanting in Gwaliar and elsewhere in India. Bābur particularly mentions a financial and military administrative building with a large *pīstāq* or archway for Tīmūr's own court, with two smaller arched structures to the left and right for financial and military officials. "Few such high arches," Bābur writes, "can be identified in the world. They say" he cautiously continues, "it is higher than the Kīsrī arch," referring to the immense Sasanid arched structure at Ctesiphon in Iraq.[65] Finally, Bābur singles out the Shavdar *tuman*, between Samarqand and Kish, and bounded by the Kuhak river on one side: "an excellent *tuman* with good weather, abundant pure water and inexpensive produce." Again extolling Samarqand's unique virtues Bābur says of Shavdar, "Travelers to Egypt and Syria cannot point to such a place as this."[66]

[64] BN-M, f. 49a.
[65] BN-M, f. 49a.
[66] BN-M, f. 50a.

If Samarqand and its surroundings represented Bābur's standards of an urban environment set amidst natural beauty in a highly cultivated hinterland, his relatives in Harat had achieved the social equivalent of those standards in their refined gatherings. While Bābur remembered many *suhbat* in gardens in and around Kabul, it seems that he had never experienced such *adabī* or refined entertainments as he knew from his three-week sojourn in Harat in December 1506. Even then he had arrived in the city too late to experience the great literary *majlis*es of Husayn Bayqara, Jāmī and Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī.[67] Bābur rates the city slightly higher than Samarqand, which had "few equals," by saying that in the "inhabited quarter of the world" there was "no such city as Harat."[68] Yet while Bābur went sight-seeing every day he was there he does not describe any of the buildings or gardens he visited; instead almost the entire text of his visit is taken up with a description of two parties he attended with his Harat cousins, Muzaffar and Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā.[69] However, in the course of recounting the first and most elaborate of these gatherings at Muzaffar Mīrzā's, Bābur spends the most space describing his indecision as to whether this was the proper time to begin drinking wine.

A few days after arriving in Harat Bābur and his brother Jahāngīr Mīrzā were invited by Muzaffar Mīrzā to his quarters in the *Bāgh-i Sefīd*, the "White Garden." The evening began with a dinner, at which Khadījah Begim, one of his paternal aunts, was also present. Following dinner the men moved off to a building reminiscent of some he remembered from Samarqand. Known as the *Tarabkhānah* or "pleasure-house," it had been built by Bābur's Tīmūrid namesake, Abūʾl Qāsim Bābur, who had ruled Harat from 1449-57. Located in the middle of a small garden, it was "a very pleasant, two-story building," and it had an "elaborately constructed second story."

[67] See for an example, Maria E. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt," *Logos Islamikos* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 137-55, where she quotes the writer Vāsifī, who described a literary gathering in Harāt in 1500/01, just before the death of Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī.

[68] BN-M, f 188a.

[69] For a list of these buildings, gardens, bridges, bāzārs and other structures see Terry Allen, *A Catalogue of Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat* (Cambridge, Ma: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Harvard and MIT, 1981). See also the author's study of the environment and history of Harat, which includes an annotated bibliography, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1983).

> In the four corners there are four alcoves. Otherwise in the midst of and between these four alcoves it was [like] the interior space of a single house. It was a single house in which the space between the alcoves was like four *shahnishīns*. All parts of this house are painted. Although Bābur Mīrzā built this house, Abū Saʿīd Mīrzā commissioned these paintings to depict his battles and combats.
>
> To the north side of the *shahnishīns* they placed two mattresses [*tushak*] opposite each other, sides facing to the north. Muzaffar Mīrzā and I sat on one *tushak*. Sultān Masʿūd Mīrzā and Jahāngīr Mīrzā sat on another *tushak*. As we were guests in Muzaffar Mīrzā's house, Muzaffar Mīrzā placed me above himself. The *sāqīlar* (cupbearers) began moving about filling the pleasure cups of the *majlis* participants. They began drinking the clear wines as if they were the "water of life." The majlis grew heated....
>
> The musicians at the majlis were Hāfiz Hajjī, Jalāl al-Dīn Nāʾī [the flautist], Ghulām Shādī's younger brother, Shādī Bacheh, the harpist, Hāfiz Hajjī sang well.[70] The Harat people sing low, elegantly and melodiously. One of Jahāngīr Mīrzā's singers was there. Named Mīr Jān, he was a Samarqandī. He sang shrilly, coarsely and out of tune. Jahāngīr Mīrzā, in his intoxicated state, ordered that he sing. He sang outlandishly shrilly, coarsely and tastelessly. Would not one block his ears and another make a face at such singing? [However] because of Jahāngīr Mīrzā no one forbade him [to sing].[71]

After the evening prayer the *majlis* participants then went off to Muzaffar Mīrzā's winter quarters, a house where there was dancing, recitation in Turkī, obscene, drunken tricks by two of Muzaffar Mīrzā's slaves, named Great Moon and Little Moon. Finally the *majlis,* which Bābur now refers to as a *suhbat,* broke up and he stayed the night at Muzaffar Mīrzā's house.

As Bābur observes, Harat in Sultan Husayn's time was wonderful, a city "full of learned and matchless people" all of whom who were busy with work, "sought to complete that work with perfection."[72] Bābur describes the poets and scholars of the city, most of whom like Jāmī, he only knew by reputation and through their work. He also gives the impression that Harat's cultured society included a broad spectrum of the population. This seems exemplified by the sophistication exhibited by a person of no particular importance whom Bābur apparently met at one of the entertain-

[70] Bābur critiques Ghulām Shādī's talents earlier in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*, where he is said to have been the composer of lovely songs and fine tunes (*naqsh*). BN-M, f. 182b.

[71] BN-M, fs. 188b-190a.

[72] BN-M, f. 177b.

ments he attended, "Another incomparable inhabitant" of the city was Pahlavān Muhammad Bū-Sayyid, whose title, "Pahlavān" given before the name, evokes his identity as an athlete or champion, in this case a wrestler, but one with sophisticated cultural tastes as well.[73]

> In wrestling he was outstanding. He also sang poetry. He also composed songs and compositions. He has a lovely composition in the *chargah* mode.[74] He was a delightful conversational companion. It is amazing to have such accomplishments combined with wrestling.[75]

Wrestling, a common and popular Turco-Mongol diversion combined here with the polite accomplishments of a Persian courtier. Wrestling also, of course, was associated with some sūfī orders, as it continues to be in modern Iran and elsewhere.

al-Bīrūnī and the Geometric Intellect

Bābur's critique of India is, therefore, one measured by the sophisticated urban and communal life of Perso-Islamic cities and the geography and topography of Kabul and Mawarannahr. His critique is in many ways simply an émigré's lament, a reflection of intense homesickness that would probably have moderated with time. Bābur, of course had already begun to try to replicate his Central Asian, Afghān environment with gardens and to fill those with Tīmūrid artists, literati and religious scholars who had begun emigrating to the subcontinent. Still that would not have lessened some of the profound cultural differences that separated him and his recreated Perso-Islamic society from Hindus who comprised the overwhelming majority of the South Asian population. These differences, symbolized by the Tīmūrid symposium, were never really bridged until Anglicized or westernized bureaucrats and intellectuals from both communities began socializing with each other on at least a limited basis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Bābur wasn't the only Muslim to react to India in this way. Five hundred years earlier another Central Asian Muslim, the scientist

[73] Elsewhere Bābur himself assigns this title, which he also lists before men's names. See for example Pahlavān Hājī Muhammad and Pahlavān Bahlūl, who were both given daggers as rewards for military feats. BN-M, f. 352b.

[74] *Chārgāh* or *chahārgāh* is explained by Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat in *The Art of Persian Music*, 42 passim.

[75] BN-M, f. 182b.

al-Bīrūnī, expressed remarkably similar criticisms of Indian, or at least the brahmanical society he knew far better and more intimately than Bābur. His response was strikingly similar considering his sophisticated intellect. Al-Bīrūnī's reaction to India and critique of its society offers one way to measure the validity of Bābur's critique, or at least to provide additional insight into presuppositions and cultural biases that determined the response of well-educated Central Asian Muslims to the Indian subcontinent.

The first Muslim known to have written a systematic study of India and its brahmanical religion, science and philosophy, Abū Rayhān Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Bīrūnī (973-c.1050), was a native of Khwarazm near the Aral Sea. He was one of many captive intellectuals whom Mahmud of Ghazna forced to reside at his frigid Afghān capital in the early eleventh century. Al-Bīrūnī was a Greco-Muslim intellectual and, along with his contemporary and correspondent Ibn Sīnā, one of the medieval Islamic world's outstanding scientists. A student of both *ʿulūm al-ʿarabīya*, Islamic knowledge, and *ʿulūm al-ʿajamīya*, the Greek sciences, he was the author of treatises on astronomy and astrology, history, geography, mathematics, mineralogy and religion, to name most of the principal categories of the 155 works that he mainly wrote in Arabic, the scientific language of the Islamic world.[76] Between 1017 and 1030 he lived in Ghazni, where significant numbers of Indians also resided, and apparently also in the Panjab within the territories conquered by Mahmūd. Al-Bīrūnī learned Sanskrit well enough to undertake his monumental study of brahmanical thought and society and Indian geography, *Tahqīq mā li'l-Hind men maqūla fiʿaql aw mardūla*, "A Verification of What is Said on India, Whether Rational or Ridiculous." This work is usually rendered simply but misleadingly as *Kitāb al-Hind* or "The Book of India," but that title obscures his intellectual intent, which was to use what he calls the geometric method, the method of moving deductively from axiom to theorem, to scrutinize brahmanical Hinduism, as well as utilizing empirical observations inductively to analyze the Indian landscape.[77] His dedication to the "Greek sciences" was as important to

[76] A fine introduction to al-Bīrūnī's scholarship is contained in the series of contributions by C. Edmund Bosworth, David Pingree, François de Blois, George Saliba, Georges C. Anawati and Bruce Lawrence to the *Encyplopaedia Iranica* under the heading, "Bīrūnī, Abū Rayhān," 4, 274-87.

[77] F.E. Peters explores the Hellenic/Alexandrian intellectual influences that

his critique of Indian thought as was geometrical proportion to Bābur's acerbic evaluation of the north Indian landscape. While his concern was with logical methodology rather than hexagonally or octagonally shaped garden pools, it shows that both men participated in the Greco-Islamic cultural/scientific world, a civilization apart from what they both discovered in India.

Al-Bīrūnī's work represents a brilliant intellectual accomplishment by any standard. No comparable single work has ever been produced on India by one scholar, and significant advances on his appreciation of brahmanical thought, society and culture and even Indian geography were not accomplished until the cumulative European research of the colonial era. This does not mean that al-Bīrūnī, for all his encyclopedic interests presented an exhaustive survey of Indian thought or that he was always correct in what he said about those texts or fields he did discuss. His knowledge was limited by his residence in northwestern India, a region, which as he noted, had been abandoned by many Indian scholars who fled Mahmūd of Ghazna's plundering expeditions. Nor for all his remarkable efforts did he have a comprehensive knowledge of Sanskrit literature.

Al-Bīrūnī came to the study of India with a cultivated Central Asian Muslim's cultural prejudices and two explicit convictions: the truth of Islam and the validity of Greco-Muslim philosophical and scientific methodology. His cultural prejudices were not solely a product of his Islamic faith. Many were not. Yet, whether shaped by Central Asian, Iranian or Islamic influences, his own cultural personality caused him to be offended by much of what he experienced in India. His religious and philosophical convictions led him to reject the validity of beliefs that conflicted with fundamental tenets of his faith, and to criticize the quality of brahmanical

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shaped both al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā's thought in his article, "Science, History and Religion: Some Reflections on the *India* of Abū'l Rayhān al-Bīrūnī," in Peter J. Chelkowski ed., *The Scholar and the Saint, Studies in Commemoration of Abu'l Rayhan al-Bīrūnī and Jalal al-Dīn al-Rūmī* (New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1975), 17-27. Al-Bīrūnī's terminology is one of many indications of his Greek or Hellenic intellectual heritage, as when he discusses the class of Hindu artisans and husbandmen and remarks: "And within these classes there were subdivisions, distinct from each other, like the species within the genus." Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* , I, 100. He also uses the term *maqūlah*, the term coined by Aristotle's Arab translators for the Aristotelian term, *categoria*. Ibid., "Annotations," 249.

thought and occasionally to misinterpret brahmans' scientific ideas.[78] Still, al-Bīrūnī wrote primarily to understand and explain rather than to criticize, judge and condemn, and he did not allow his emotional revulsion at Hindu customs or his faith and intellectual presuppositions to interfere substantially with a largely dispassionate explanation of Indian religion, science and society. His enlightened Muslim scientist's approach to all religions can be seen in his rejection of unfair criticisms of Nestorian Christians about whom he writes "For although their doctrines are bad, their way of life is the highest pinnacle of chastity and integrity and kindness."[79] Al-Bīrūnī's treatise on India is the most thorough and balanced analysis of brahmanical theology, science and society ever written by a Muslim. He wrote that his principal goal was to tell the truth, which like justice, al-Bīrūnī said, had it own "intrinsic beauty."[80] He intended to determine the truth about India by a "strictly scientific method" of analysis.[81] He was not writing a polemical book, he repeatedly emphasizes, but was offering "a simple historic record of facts."[82] Al-Bīrūnī accurately insisted that "In most parts of my work I simply relate without criticizing, unless there be a specific reason for doing so."[83]

Still, for all his intellectual self-awareness al-Bīrūnī could not overcome his emotional reaction to Hindu culture, much of which he found to be simultaneously exotic and repugnant. As befits a scholar with far more leisure time than Bābur ever enjoyed, he also writes at considerably greater length. Anticipating Bābur's later astonished and largely negative reaction to India—and Khwājah Kalān's feeling that everything in India was "upside down"—al-Bīrūnī reports of Indians that:

> First, they differ from us in everything which other nations have in common... "Many Hindu customs differ from those of our country and of our time to such a degree as to appear to us simply monstrous. One might almost think they had intentionally changed them into the opposite, for our customs do not resemble theirs, but are the very reverse.[84]

[78] David Pingree, "Bīrūnī, Abū Rayhān," 'History and Chronology," EIr, 282-83. Pingree does not, it must be emphasized, discuss al-Bīrūnī's cultural prejudices.

[79] François de Blois, "History of Religions," in "Bīrūnī, EIr 4, 283.

[80] Sachau, *Alberuni's India* I, 5.

[81] Ibid., 6.

[82] Ibid., 7.

[83] Ibid., 25.

[84] Ibid., 16 and 179.

He discusses personal hygiene, Hindus' eating habits, their clothing, family relations, social habits and other topics, many of which reflect his special knowledge of brahmanical and upper-caste Indian society.

The list of customs al-Bīrūnī found either curious or offensive ranged from the way they played chess—four persons at a time—to their inexplicable tastes: "They like," al-Bīrūnī writes with obvious revulsion, "the juice which flows over the cheeks of the rutting elephant, which in reality has the most horrid smell."[85] Not only do Hindus not cut body hair—to prevent sunstroke—al-Bīrūnī says, but, he observes, when obviously speaking of upper castes, "They let the nails grow long, glorying in their idleness...."[86] When they eat, al-Bīrūnī reports of the custom so many foreigners found inexplicable and socially isolating, Hindus sit "singly, one by one, on a tablecloth of dung."[87] Then too, "They drink wine before having eaten anything....[and] they sip the stall of cows, but they do not eat their meat."[88] He continues, apparently alluding to the dhoti commonly worn in north India that Bābur disliked, saying not only do they "wear turbans for trousers," but "Men wear articles of female dress; they use cosmetics, wear earrings, armrings, golden seal rings on the ring-finger as well as on the toes of the feet."[89] Al-Bīrūnī also found it curious that Hindus always consult women in emergencies and prefer the younger child to the elder, at least in the eastern part of the country.[90] Then too, not only were some Hindu sexual practices strange and repulsive but they also regarded the linga as sacred, as it symbolized Mahadaeva/Shiva.[91] Beyond all these curiosities al-Bīrūnī obviously felt that Hindus lacked common social graces, or the manners he and Bābur respected, for he reports "They spit out and blow their noses without any respect for the elder ones present," and "If one of them hands over a thing to another, he expects that it should be thrown to him as we throw a thing to the dogs."[92]

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[85] Ibid., 182-83.
[86] Ibid., 180.
[87] Ibid., 180.
[88] Ibid., 180.
[89] Ibid., 180 & 81.
[90] Ibid., 181.
[91] Ibid., 181.
[92] Ibid., 182.

In trying to explain these and other examples of "the innate perversity of Hindu nature" al-Bīrūnī compassionately observes that "heathen Arabs too committed crimes and obscenities," but pointed out that among the Arabs Islam had eradicated many of the things for which he criticizes the Hindus, "as it also has abolished them in those parts of India the people of which have become Muslims."[93] Of course while some of these customs, such as eating alone and throwing things at people's feet, may be attributed specifically to brahmanical pollution restrictions and therefore something that might change with Islam, the habit of wearing dhotis is more a reflection of India's climate. Al-Bīrūnī's comment about dress was probably a reflection of his Central Asian and Afghān background, where the temperate climate dictated more elaborate, or in moral terms, more modest clothing.

If Muslims could suppress their culture shock they still found it difficult to study with brahmans, and as a scientist al-Bīrūnī was especially appalled by brahman secretiveness and ethnocentrism, for they did not wish to share sacred knowledge with foreigners any more than with their own lower castes, both of whom they regarded as polluting. Al-Bīrūnī noted "They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted."[94] Here was an early manifestation of what Bābur evidently meant when he criticized Indians for their lack of "convivial society and social intercourse." Nor did brahmans in al-Bīrūnī's time have the slightest interest in suspending pollution restrictions for foreign scientists, although they must have done so to some degree for him, because of what al-Bīrūnī characterized as their appallingly blind ethnocentrism.

In the past, he noted, at least one Hindu scholar argued that "even though the Greeks were impure, they must be honored, since they were trained in the sciences," but by the eleventh century they had totally lost interest in the outside world. "Folly is an illness for which there is no medicine."[95] According to their belief," al-Bīrūnī wrote, "there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings

[93] Ibid., 185-86.
[94] Ibid., 19-20.
[95] Ibid., 22.

like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs.... Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan or Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar."[96] He conceded, though, that Mahmūd of Ghazna's eleventh century pillaging raids on northwestern India had exacerbated these problems, as these attacks caused Hindus both to hate Muslims and flee from them to Kashmir and Banaras, which in his day had become centers for brahmanical scholarship.[97]

As a scientist al-Bīrūnī was even more troubled by what he saw as the appalling state of brahmanical scientific and religious texts which, he implies, reflected an even more serious problem: the chaotic quality of brahmanical thought. Al-Bīrūnī evidently thought brahmans were custodians of what was, in Greco-Islamic terms, a pre-scientific civilization. One aspect of Indian scholarship that caught his notice and convinced him of this was the Hindu belief that the oral tradition was the canonical one and therefore brahmans produced texts in various metrics to facilitate their memorization. The resulting Sanskrit poetical texts were, he thought, exceptionally confusing; metrics, he noted, dictated sound rather than clarity and sometimes required meaningless phraseology to complete a particular verse. Al-Bīrūnī pointedly observed that brahmans could have explained their ideas more clearly in prose, reflecting his lack of knowledge of many Sanskrit prose works. Indian scribes, he also reported, were careless and failed to produce accurate copies even of these manuscripts, so that the second copy of a particular work scarcely resembled the original.[98] Al-Bīrūnī wrote as a Greco-Islamic scientist confronting a tradition of sacred literature whose authors had a strong *literary* sense of textual symmetry based upon Sanskrit metrics but what he thought to be a poorly developed scientific tradition.[99] In al-Bīrūnī's eyes, indeed, these texts were symptomatic of the most intellectually debilitating defect of Indian thought, the chaotic nature of brahman abstract reasoning.

"Even the so-called scientific theorems of the Hindus," al-Bīrūnī remarks "are in a state of utter confusion, devoid of any logical order."[100] Logic is the key word in this sentence; it refers to Greek

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[96] Ibid., 22-23.
[97] Ibid., 22.
[98] Ibid., 17-19.
[99] Ibid., 137.
[100] Ibid., 25.

philosophical/mathematical thought. Al-Bīrūnī attributed this logical failure to the lack of philosophers in India, where no one of the quality of such thinkers as Socrates had ever lived who could separate "pearl shells and sour dates," or "pearls and dung," or "costly crystals and common pebbles" in their mathematical and astronomical literature. He caustically observes of brahman thinkers, "Both kinds of things are equal in their eyes, since they cannot raise themselves to the methods of a strictly scientific deduction."[101] And while he cites Socrates, al-Bīrūnī undoubtedly had in mind Aristotelian scientific reasoning. It was particularly Aristotle's "geometrical method" he followed in his own arguments, that is a systematic series of deductions from axiomatic first principles.[102] The importance that Greco-Muslim thinkers attached to the geometric method of analysis later led Ibn Khaldun to remark, "Our teachers used to say that one's application to geometry does to the mind what soap does to a garment. It washes off the stains and cleanses it of grease and dirt."[103] ʿUmar Khayyām made a similar point more than three centuries earlier when he remarked in his "Commentary on the Difficulties of Certain Postulates of Euclid's Work," that geometry "has the advantage of exerting and sharpening the mind, and of accustoming the soul to being repelled by what cannot be demonstrated."[104]

Al-Bīrūnī has been justly praised for his balanced, scientific study of north Indian brahmanical culture, but he also demonstrates the existence of the clearly demarcated cultural boundary between Iranian and Central Asian Muslims and South Asian Hindus—in his repugnance for Indian habits and strong critique of brahmanical scholarship. In his era the fundamental differences between Islamic and South Asian cartography metaphorically mapped out the existence of this distinct cultural boundary, in which social habits represented transient or superficial signs of fundamental value differences.[105] Al-Bīrūnī's own contributions to "the mathematical

[101] Ibid., 25.

[102] Ibid., 26, and Robin Smith, "Logic," in Jonathan Barnes, *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 25-6 & 47.

[103] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, III, 131.

[104] Abū al-Fath ʿUmar ibn Ibrahīm al-Khayyāmī, "Commentary on the Difficulties of Certain Postulates of Euclid's Work," in R. Rashed and B. Vahabzadeh ed., *Omar Khayyam the Mathematician*, 218. Both scholars were disciples of Ibn Sīnā.

[105] See Frederik Barth ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Oslo: Universitets

and astronomical basis of celestial and geographical cartography" in the Islamic world highlights some of the profound intellectual differences between the Islamic and Indic regions.[106] These cartographic sciences simply did not exist in pre-Islamic India. Despite fundamental Indic contributions to mathematics, no Indian celestial or geographical maps are known to have existed prior to the introduction of Ptolemaic theory in the tenth century, by al-Bīrūnī among others. Traditional Indic cartography was cosmology. Merchants connected these worlds across the Indus, but the cultural and intellectual divide was, al-Bīrūnī felt, nearly impassable.

"If there is Paradise on Earth..."

Al-Bīrūnī's critique did not, however, represent the opinion of all Muslims, in particular the fourteenth century Indo-Muslim poet, Amīr Khusrau, whose work was known throughout the Persian-speaking world. More specifically it was well known to Bābur's father, Bābur himself and most of all to Bābur's cousin, the erudite Baysunghur Mīrzā, who collected and identified more than one hundred and twenty thousand of his verses.[107] Roughly two hundred years after Mahmūd of Ghazna brought al-Bīrūnī from Khwarazm to Ghazni, and some two hundred years before the battle of Panipat, Amīr Khusrau (1253-1325) wrote a verse commentary on India that differed in most ways from al-Bīrūnī's work and also from Bābur's. Unlike al-Bīrūnī who came to India "as a foreigner and ...left it as a foreigner," or Bābur, who came to India and died there a foreigner, Amīr Khusrau was a native.[108] Born in India of a Turkic father and an Indian Muslim mother, Amīr Khusrau wrote as an Indian Muslim, born and bred in the subcontinent.[109]

Forlaget, 1969), and John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith ed., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[106] Ahmet Karamustafa, "Introduction to Islamic Maps," in J. B. Harley and David Woodward ed. *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, 2, 1 of *The History of Cartography* (Chicago and London: U. of Chicago Press, 1992), 7.

[107] Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā, *The Life and Times of Amir Khusrau* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, repr. 1974), 142 & n. 2.

[108] Aga Mehdi Husain gives the moving tribute of an Indian Muslim to Amīr Khusrau's Indianess in his essay, "India's Al-Beruni." in Ansari ed., *Life, Times and Works of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavī*, 281-87.

[109] Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā discusses Amīr Khusrau's father's family with

He knew Afghanistan, Mawarannahr, Iran and other regions of the Islamic world only through literature or report. As a native he offers a completely different view of India and its society, a view that can be used to understand the attitudes and evaluate the comments of the visiting Central Asian Muslim scientist, al-Bīrūnī and the émigré Central Asian Muslim ruler, Bābur. To Amīr Khusrau, India had a perfect climate, it was home to the world's foremost scholars and scientists, the brahmans, and was inhabited by animals that were, quite literally, marvelous. Delhi, then the capital, was one of the Islamic world's most beautiful cities. The country was, in fact, "a paradise on earth," a phrase quoted and a conviction literally echoed, ironically, by Bābur's great-great-grandson, the second Tīmūr and builder of the Tāj Mahal, Shāh Jahān.

Abū'l Hasan Yamīn al-Dīn Khusrau was a court poet for several princes and sultans of Delhi, including his principal patron, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Khiljī (1296-1315). These rulers were representatives of the largely Turkic warrior class personified by Amīr Khusrau's own father, men who expanded the Ghaznavid conquest of the Panjab into the north Indian heartland, Bengal and central India between the twelfth and the fourteenth century.[110] He also was a *murīd* or disciple of the single most influential Indo-Muslim Chishtī *shaykh*, Nizām al-Dīn Awlīyaʾ, whose tomb Bābur circumambulated when he first entered Delhi. An immensely prolific and talented writer in Persian, Turkish, and Hinduwī, most of his literary work consisted of *qasīdahs* in praise of the Delhi sultans, but he also wrote *rubāʿiyāt* and numerous *ghazal*s, some at least used for *samaʿ* or musical devotions with Nizām al-Dīn Awlīya. He was also a musician.[111] In addition Amīr Khusrau wrote narrative historical verse in the *masnavī* form about his patrons. His most original *masnavī* may be

great care, concluding they were originally Turks known as the Lāchīn Hazarahs, perhaps from Shahr-i sabz, Tīmūr's birthplace, who later migrated to the Balkh region and came to India during the campaigns of Chingīz Khān in the early thirteenth century. *The Life and Times of Amir Khusrau* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, repr. 1974), 6-16. The definitive political and military history of the Sultanate is by Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate.*

[110] A detailed chronology of his life, official appointments and a list of his verse and prose works is given in Government of India, Publications Division, *Amir Khusrau Memorial Volume* (Delhi: Government of India, 1975), 203-8.

[111] See the articles by Shahab Sarmadee, "About Music and Amir Khusrau's own writings on music," and Abdul Halim Jaferkhan, "Amir Khusrau and Hindustani Music and Jaideva Singh Thakur, "Notes on Amir Khusrau's Musical Compositions," in Ansari ed., *Life, Times and Works of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavī*, 241-81.

the long poem titled the *Nuh sipihr* or "Nine Spheres," that is the nine celestial spheres, written in 1318 and devoted to describing events in the reign of his then patron Qutb al-Dīn Mubarak Shāh. The third section of this work was devoted to the lavish praise of an India hardly recognizable from Bābur's and al-Bīrūnī's critiques, suggesting that many of the seemingly impassable cultural boundaries they demarcated were less formidable than they appeared from these men's works.

Amīr Khusrau praises his Indian homeland in many of his five *dīwān*s and historical *masnavīs*.[112] Most of this praise is contained within and is inextricably linked to his fulsome not to say hyperbolic panegyrics dedicated to various patrons. That is, his appreciation of the country is in one respect merely another way to praise its rulers. One of many such examples is his enthusiastic description of the royal capital, Delhi, written in 1288, and included within the *masnavī*, *Qirān al-sa'dayn*, the "Conjunction of Jupiter and Venus," an astrological moment ironically more often associated with Tīmūr, who in 1398 sacked Delhi and destroyed the Delhi Sultanate.[113] In another instance his praise of India, or at least its north Indian Muslim lingua franca Persian, was a means of praising himself. His belief in the superiority of Indo-Persian is associated with his oft-proclaimed but quite legitimate appreciation of his own literary talents. He argued that it was only in Mawarannahr and India that true or "original" Persian," *Farsī-yi darī*, survived, and that this explained the greatness of Indian poetry. In his own estimate he was, of course, the greatest representative of this original tradition. In part this was also an effort to counter the well-known condescension of Iranian writers, who were rarely shy about expressing their contempt for *sabk-i Hindi*, the Indo-Persian literary idiom.[114] Still, there can be little doubt about his genuine love for his Indian homeland, which in the *Nuh sipihr,* or "Nine Spheres," is

[112] Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā devotes a valuable chapter to a detailed discussion of Amīr Khusrau's enormous corpus in his biography of the poet, *The Life and Times of Amir Khusrau*, chapter IV, 140-232. A useful supplement to Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā's descriptions of Amīr Khusrau's works is provided by Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rehman in his essay "Appreciative Study of Variagatedness of Ameer Khusrau's Poetry," in Ansari ed., *Life, Times and Works of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavi*, 83-102.

[113] Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rehman summarizes the Delhi section of this work. "Appreciative Study of Variagatedness of Amir Khusrau's Poetry," 88-89.

[114] Wahid Mīrzā, *The Life and Times of Amīr Khusrau*, 160-61.

given a remarkable range of expression.[115]

Amīr Khusrau's poetic appreciation of India in this work is stylistically distinct from Bābur's and al-Bīrūnī's prose accounts. He is striving for literary effect, not scientific or pragmatic precision. Like many of Amīr Khusrau's poems that include praise of things Indian, it is also a panegyric, dedicated to Mubarak Shāh Khiljī (r.1316-1320). In consequence Amīr Khusrau's account of India has to be considered in the spirit in which it was written. The panegyric tone also pervades the third section of the poem, the third sphere, dedicated to Saturn, which like the rest of the text is written in rhymed couplets. It is given over to fulsome praise of India, an integral part of which are periodic interjections of praise for Mubarak Shāh. Amīr Khusrau justifies the tone by saying Mubarak Shāh is the country's ruler while he himself is a native.[116] If the British Indian empire had survived as one Indo-Muslim state in 1947 rather than being partitioned, this section of poem might well have become part of a Hindu-Muslim patriotic canon. Given the panegyric character of the entire poem, it is not surprising that the third section contains not even a trace of the emotional revulsion that both Bābur and al-Bīrūnī express for certain Indian customs or Bābur's distaste for the Indian climate or landscape. To have criticized India would have been to denigrate his patron and reject his own heritage. Indeed, following the introduction to the third section that is partly given over to praising his own literary skills, Amīr Khusrau begins with an "intellectual proof" that *kishvar-i Hind ast bihishtī bizamīn*, "the country of India is a paradise on earth."[117]

The first two of seven proofs Amīr Khusrau's cites as evidence that India was a paradise are the most engaging, if not intellectually convincing. The first is based upon its climate, one of the features that sent Khwājah Kalān and many of Bābur's men fleeing back to Kabul. Using a kind of circular logic, he argues that when Adam was banished from paradise in heaven he was sent to a region with

[115] The Persian text is available in a scholarly edition by Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā, ed., *The Nuh Sipihr of Amīr Khusrau* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1949). An English translation of the third sphere has been published by R. Nath and Faiyaz 'Gwaliari' as *India as Seen by Amir Khusrau* (in 1318 A.D) (Jaipur, India: Historical Research Documentation Programme, 1981).

[116] NS, III, 150.

[117] NS, III, 151.

similar climate where he could easily survive, and that was India. Logically then, as India has a climate where Adam was able to survive it resembles the heavenly paradise. It is, therefore, "a paradise *on* earth." For if Adam had been sent to Khurasan, Ray (northern Iran), Arabia or China he would not have long survived, because the cold and warm seasons in those places are so severe.[118] Part of the argument by climate is that it allows flowers to bloom year around, giving the country the sweet scent of paradise. If this wasn't proof enough there is the evidence of the peacock. The second, or *hujjat-i digar*, "another proof" is that India is the home of the peacock, the Bird of Paradise, a fowl that Bābur has described in a clinical but altogether unemotive manner. The bird of paradise, Amīr Khusrau argues, can only live in paradise, so if India was not paradise, why was India made the home of the peacock? If paradise was elsewhere, the peacock would have gone there?

What al-Bīrūnī would have thought of such *hujaj*, such "arguments" or "proofs" is impossible to say but not difficult to imagine. Logic, indeed, is tossed out the window when at the conclusion of the section Amīr Khusrau attributes India's unique atmosphere to the grace of the "Axis of the World," that is Qutb al-Dīn (Pillar of Religion) Mubarak Shāh, his patron. However, having shown India is a paradise by these proofs the poet plunges artistically forward, first elaborating on his early argument about India's climate. Responding to people of Khurasan, that is Iranians, or perhaps Turco-Mongols from Harat, who complain about India's hot climate, Amīr Khusrau says that these people are so distracted by the cold they cannot even listen to the argument that India is a paradise. He points out that the cold in Khurasan kills people, while the hot weather in India is only a minor irritant. This leads him into an extended argument about the special flowers and fruits that grow in India's climate. Given that it is spring the year round there is an abundance of flowers which have fragrance, unlike those of Khurasan. Then there is the fact that many fruits, such as mangoes, bananas and sugarcane are found only in India, while only guavas and grapes are found in Khurasan.

Bābur, of course, agreed with the facts of this argument, but not the conclusions, at least as far as Kabul was concerned, which for some Indians was included within the huge, vaguely defined region,

[118] NS, III, 151-52.

Khurasan.[119] While describing the pleasant period of the Indian climate after the monsoon, he praised Kabul's climate for allowing one to sleep under blankets year around, and while appreciating and even praising Indian fruits, preferred the melons and grapes he knew from Mawarannahr and Kabul.[120] The difference between the two presentations is partly due to Bābur's audience, his preference for his native continental climate, and to his purpose in writing a gazetteer. Amīr Khusrau was writing a panegyric and trying his best to be please his patron with beautifully rendered if tortuous arguments. However, he admits to his bias in favor of his country as he moves on to his second argument, the superiority of Indian, that is Hindu learning.

Here in what is the most remarkable and unexpected section for a professional Muslim eulogist, Amīr Khusrau implicitly engages al-Bīrūnī's commentary, although he gives no evidence of being aware of the scientist's great Indian treatise. On one fundamental religious point Amīr Khusrau agrees with al-Bīrūnī. They both interpret brahmanical Hinduism as a form of pantheistic monotheism that more closely resembles Islam than either Christianity or Zoroastrianism. And while al-Bīrūnī attributed the common worship of idols to popular practice not followed by brahmans, Amīr Khusrau attributed the worship of cows, the sun and plants to the idea that all these things were God's creation and shared a part of his divinity. He says, quite simply, that Hindus are among those people who believe in God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, an omniscient God who is pure truth. Some people may shun brahmanical teachings they do not understand. Amīr Khusrau, however, not only recognizes the integrity of their fundamental religious concepts, but admires brahmans as the creators of the world's superior scientific tradition.

In some respects he and al-Bīrūnī would undoubtedly agree about India's scientific tradition. At least al-Bīrūnī would have to concede Amīr Khusrau's point that *Hindsā* or mathematics originated in the country where the zero was invented, and that the figures of one and zero are the basis for mathematical calculation—

[119] Bābur remarks that Indians call everything outside of Hindustan, "Khurasan." BN-M, f. 129a.

[120] BN-M, f. 129b.

and now of course, the basis for computers. As an astrologer al-Bīrūnī was also aware that India made significant contributions to that field. However, he would have parted ways with the poet when Amīr Khusrau asserted that in *ʿilm u khirad*, "knowledge and wisdom," brahmans surpassed Aristotle or that the rational sciences, natural and mathematical, had originated in India. Then implicitly revealing his lack of knowledge of al-Bīrūnī's works, Amīr Khusrau writes that since no one has tried to learn from brahmans their knowledge has remained hidden.[121] Later he implicitly modifies these hyperbolic statements and says that three *hunar* or arts originated in India, mathematics, the *Dimnah-kalīlah* or *Panchatantra* animal tales, and finally chess, a game whose limits people have tried to fathom but have failed. While he does not say that brahmans invented chess he does finally assert that they are also masters of magic and the occult, enabling them as jogis or spiritual ascetics, to raise the dead, control minds, fly or disappear—among other miraculous powers.[122]

As a musician and linguist Amīr Khusrau argues also for the superiority of Indian music and the beauty of Indian languages, and even the superiority of Sanskrit to Persian. He concedes that foreigners introduced new elements into Indian music, but added nothing basic to its fundamentals, which even hypnotizes wild deer.[123] As for Indian languages, while mentioning regional languages found in every part of the country, Khusrau describes Sanskrit as the best language of all. It is a pearl among pearls, inferior perhaps to Arabic, but not to Persian, Amīr Khusrau's own literary language, whose sweetness it equals. Only brahmans, he observes, know this language, in which are written their four religious books, the *Vedas*, the source of all [Hindu] learning.

In addition to all these unique characteristics India is home to animals and birds so intelligent, as he writes in his introductory couplet, that they seem to resemble rational human beings. This section parallels his earlier tribute to brahmans, that is India's animals are as superior as its human beings. Here there are some commonalities with Bābur's beastiary, but with little of his precise physical description, practical information and skeptical tone. In-

[121] NS, III, 162-63.
[122] NS, III, 193-94.
[123] NS, III, 171-72.

stead, Amīr Khusrau concentrates on two groups of animals, those who speak or act and think like humans. He begins with the parrot and the maynah. The Indian tūtī or parrot who speaks like humans has the ability to recite verses of the Quran and offer prayers, while the maynah speaks even more clearly. Almost as wonderful are the two Indian mammals that can be trained, the monkey and the elephant. Both have some human qualities. The monkey acts like men and the elephant has a highly developed moral sense. The elephant, of course, adorns the court of kings, such as Amīr Khusrau's patron, Mubarak Shāh, a man so exalted that only these majestic animals could stand before his gate. Included within this section is a description of the peacock, in which Amīr Khusrau surprisingly makes no reference to his earlier proof that the bird's presence shows India to be an earthly paradise. Instead he devotes himself to poetic descriptions of the peacock's unusual beauty, and then concludes by telling a story about its unique reproductive techniques, passing semen through its eyes, which, after falling to the ground, is then swallowed by the female. Not surprisingly given his medium and panegyric purpose, Amīr Khusrau does not express skepticism about this story, but merely challenges readers to come to India to verify it for themselves.

Cultural Boundaries

Amīr Khusrau's challenge to his Persian-speaking audience to verify his story about the peacock's unheard of mating habits is a final bit of literary bravado that falls into the same category as his tale of yogis' miraculous powers. While not openly expressing skepticism as Bābur so carefully does, Amīr Khusrau also does not really try to convince his readers he believes such stories. They are part of his panegyric story telling. The differences in the picture of India as rendered by a court poet from those of a sophisticated Muslim scientist and an intellectually acute and practical ruler is highlighted by the fact that Amīr Khusrau finds no fault with his homeland. Bābur and al-Bīrūnī for all their culture shock still found some things to admire and even like about India. Bābur, for all of his own almost undiluted praise for Samarqand and Harat, even finds fault with some aspects of the climate of Mawarannahr. Amīr Khusrau is writing for such an entirely different purpose and

audience that he could not express skepticism or dilute his praise.

Still, Amīr Khusrau's praise for all things Indian is so encyclopedic and sometimes so evidently emotional, he convinces his readers he loved what he knew, and he knew only north India, not the grapes and wildflowers of Istalif or the great cities of Khurasan and Mawarannahr. His account highlights the degree to which Bābur's and al-Bīrūnī's reactions to India were simply and unambiguously the result of culture shock: their boredom with the flat landscape, shock at seeing a half-naked population, surprise at the curious way of playing chess or outright revulsion with many personal habits. Most of the things that repelled these two Central Asian Muslims were only superficial markers on the boundaries between their own and Indian society. They were not issues for Bābur's descendants who, like Amīr Khusrau, grew up in India. Neither Bābur's grandson Akbar, nor Akbar's amanuensis Abū'l Fazl, were repulsed by their environment. Both might also have applauded Amīr Khusrau's poem *'Ashīqa*, based on the true story of the love between a Muslim prince and a Rajput princess, given Akbar's Rajput marriages. Indeed, this poem, which is not a panegyric composition, although it was suggested by the prince himself, Khidr Khan, is probably the most emotionally and artistically persuasive testimonial to his love for India. It is far more convincing in this respect than the logically strained *Nuh sipihr*.[124] Both al-Bīrūnī and Bābur might also have sympathized with his religious perplexity, probably the product of his Chishtī sufi spiritualism, which leads him to call poetically to a generic brahman to allow him, whom Islam had rejected, to enter the temple with its idol.[125] However, when it comes to fundamental values that represent the most formidable barriers to the blending of ethnic groups or the absorption of one by another, the evidence of Amīr Khusrau's divergence from Bābur and al-Bīrūnī is more ambiguous.

That ambiguity is partly a factor of Amīr Khusrau's role as a panegyric poet whose art forbade negative criticism and favored the artfully rendered image over prosaic precision. The ambiguity is also highlighted by his willingness to write panegyric poems celebrating the Muslim victories of his patrons over Hindu king-

[124] It is eloquently described by Muhammad Wahid Mīrzā, *The Life and Works of Amīr Khusrau*, 177-81.

[125] Cited by Aga Mehdi Husain, "India's Al-Beruni," in Ansari ed., *Life and Times of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavi*, 286.

doms. In the *Khazā'in al-futūh*, the "Treasures of Victories," written in 1311 A. D., he celebrates ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Khiljī's military victories in northern and central India.[126] In these verses the poet describes how the Muslim armies destroyed the Somnath temple and that Gujarat, once the Mecca of the infidels became the Medina of Islam, and he applauds that fact that in Hindustan generally the holy warriors had made Islam triumphant.[127] Poems such as this make readers wonder if India would have been a paradise on earth for him if ruled by Hindus. Or would it have mattered to a professional poet as long as he was employed to write verse? While he exalts the *ghāzī* ideal repeatedly and far more effusively than Bābur, his seeming attachment to a militant Islam may be read just as skeptically as his logical somersaults designed to prove that India was a paradise. Both were part of his panegyric art.

However, apart from his professional limitations there is also the fact that like al-Bīrūnī, Amīr Khusrau valued brahmanical Hinduism to the degree it resembled the fundamental monotheistic principals of Islam and also rated brahmanical intellects against the achievements of Aristotle. Nor is it really possible to say that he felt any differently about the socially isolating effects of Hindu pollution concepts than did Bābur or al-Bīrūnī or any earlier or later visitors to India from the west. As Greek and Latin writers made clear, in social terms commensal relations are one of the most important defining customs of any ethnic group and Amīr Khusrau says nothing about social interaction with Hindus, although his interest in Indian music suggests that he at least had sustained artistic contact with non-Muslim musicians. His poetic idiom, though, including verses intended to be sung at Chishtī *sama*ʿ performances, was entirely Perso-Islamic.

It is finally important to recall that Bābur was familiar with Amīr Khusrau's poetry, both from hearing it recited at his father's court and reading the poems himself. He quotes, after all, from the *Qirān al-sa'dayn*, although only on mangoes. It would be ironic indeed if he was alluding to Amīr Khusrau's poem the *Hasht Bihisht* or "Eight Paradises" when he named one of his gardens in Agra the "Eight-Paradise Garden," but it is far more likely he was thinking of one

126 Wahid Mīrzā trans., *Khazain-al-Futuh*.

127 Cited by Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, "Military Morality in Medieval India Laws of War and Peace," in *Life Times and works of Amīr Khusrau Dehlavi*, 57-8.

of the pavilions by that name in Harat, Tabriz or another Islamic city.[128] In the late seventeenth century another *Hasht Bihisht* garden and pavilion were constructed in Safavid Isfahan.[129] However, if Bābur did read the *Nuh sipihr, ʿAshīqa* or any other of Amīr Khusrau's poems it had no discernible influence on his Indian gazetteer. In that essay he made it clear that the only paradise he could imagine while he lived in India was a *suhbat ve suhbatārāyalïq* gathering held within the geometrically precise boundaries of a Tīmūrid garden in Kabul, Harat or Samarqand.

[128] Lisa Golombek, "From Tamerlane to the Taj Mahal," in Monica Juneja ed., *Architecture in Medieval India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 321-22.

[129] Stephen P. Blake, *Half the World* The Social Architecture of Safavid Isfahan, 1590-1722 (Costa Mesa, Ca.: Mazda, 1999), 71-2.

ILLUSTRATIONS



1. View from Ancient Akhsi southeast toward Andijan.



2. Gūr-i Amīr: Tīmūr’s tomb in Samarqand.



3. Madrasah of Ulugh Beg in Samarqand.



4. Yūnas Khan's tomb in Tashkent.



5. Mahmūd Khan reviews the Yak-trail Standards in Ferghanah, June 1502. [Slide No. 97602]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



6. Bābur orders a garden stream staightened at Istalif, sometime after September 1504. Illustrating: the Kabul Gazetteer. [Slide No. 14755]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



7. Harat fortress.



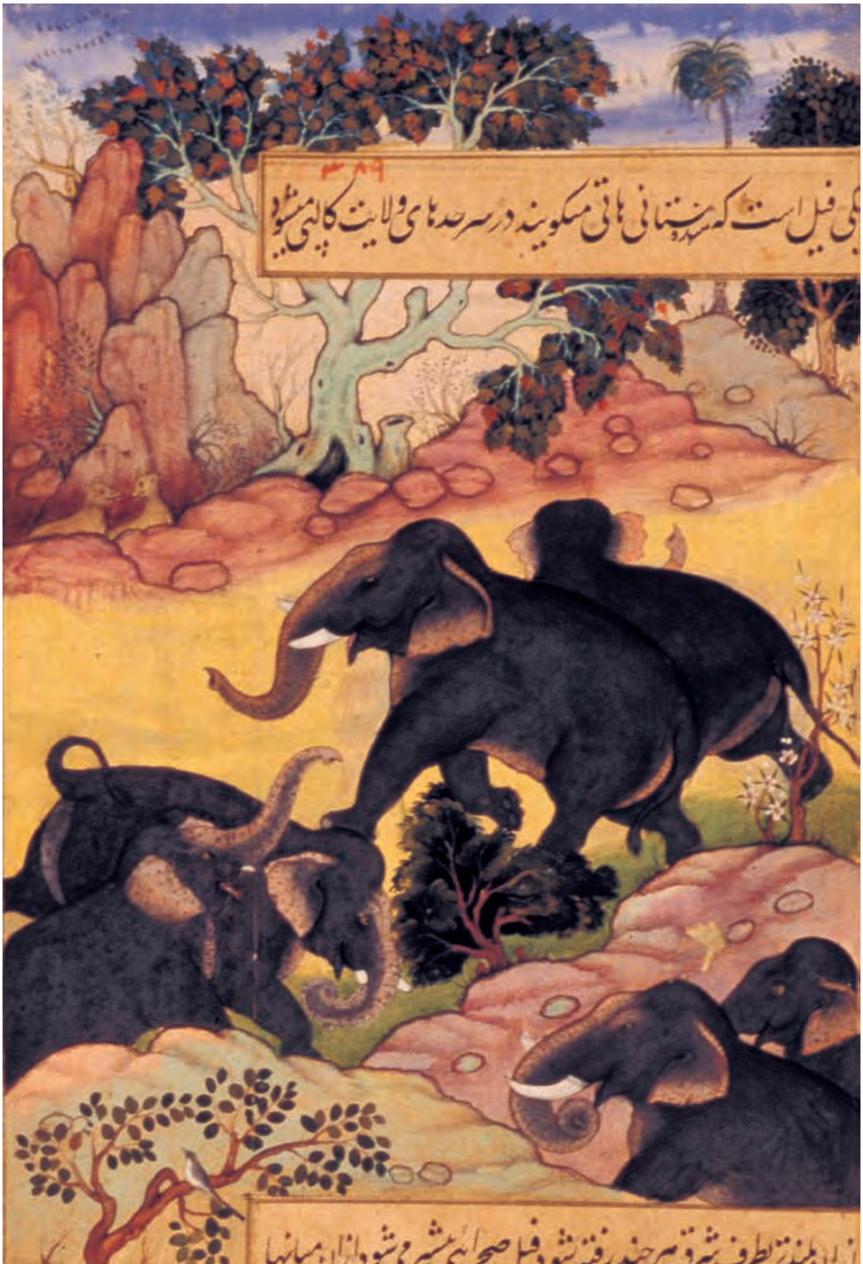
8. Masjid-i Jāmiʿ: Friday mosque of Harat.



9. Bābur visits female relatives at Husayn Bayqara's *madrasah* in Harat, December 1506. [Slide No. 97614]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



10. Bābur returns to camp drunk on horseback, March 1519. [Slide No. 97626]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



11. Indian elephants. Illustrating: the Indian Gazetteer. [Slide No. 97632]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



12. Assault on Rajput fortress of Chandiri, January 1528. [Slide No. 97682]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



13. Bābur tours Gwalior, September 1528. [Slide No. 97683]. Or. 3714. By permission of the British Library.



14. Statue of Bābur and shrine in Andijan.



15. Bābur's symbolic tomb in Andijan.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE REWARDS OF EMPIRE, THE LONELINESS OF EXILE

بو هند ییری حاصلی دین کوب کونکل آلدیم
نی سود که بو ییر مینی دلکیر قیلیب تور
*

I deeply desired the riches of this Indian land,
What is the profit since this land oppresses me?
Bābur in the *Rampur Dīwān*
Agra. 28 December 1528

On November 27, 1528 Bābur sent letters to his sons, Humāyūn and Kāmrān, and to his old friend Khwājah Kalān, all of whom were in Afghanistan, Humāyūn apparently in Badakhshan, Kāmrān in Qandahar and Khwājah Kalān in Kabul. In his long letter to Humāyūn, Bābur urges his oldest son to take action against his old foes, the Uzbeks. Prodding him with a mixture of warm words and probably irritating fatherly criticism, Bābur urges Humāyūn to act aggressively. "An idle life in retirement," he pointedly observes, "is incompatible with kingship." Then characteristically Bābur legitimizes this hoary observation with a Persian quatrain, in this instance possibly quoting Nizāmī's *Khusrau and Shīrīn* and more particularly Shīrīn's address to Khusrau explaining why their marriage had to be postponed for politics.

جهانگیری توقف بر نیابد جهان آنرا بود کو به شتابد
همه چیزی ز روی کدخدائ سکون می یابد الا بادشاهی
*

Conquest does not spring from hesitation,
He who hastens gains the world.
Concerning marriage, everything is suspended
But kingship.[1]

[1] BN-M, f. 348b. BN-B, 625 n. 7. Annette Beveridge—or more accurately, her husband, Henry Beveridge—identified this verse.

The letter was another contribution to Bābur's multifaceted "mirror for princes." Yet, rarely did a father speak from more immediate experience than Bābur, who despite his victories at Panipat and Kanwah, found himself enmeshed in a seemingly endless series of campaigns to pacify northern India. While his army typically rested during the monsoons Bābur otherwise was constantly in motion, leading or directing his men in all directions from Agra while seeing to each detail of his expanding empire. Only sickness inhibited his activity, and increasingly frequent and severe illnesses afflicted him from the late spring of 1527. In fact, in the remaining text, which finally breaks off for good in September 1529, more than a year before his death, Bābur increasingly conveys a sense of his own mortality, even as he continues his detailed military narrative. Not only does he describe his illnesses, depression and nostalgia for the golden days of Kabul, but the material he chose to include in the text implicitly reveals his consciousness that his career was ending, letters such as the one to Humāyūn and another he sent to Khwājah Kalān. His verse makes his condition and mood even more clear, expressing emotions that are often only hinted at in the *Vaqā'i'*. Yet, even in the midst of these increasingly dour reflections he continued to try to replicate the gardens of Ferghanah, Samarqand, Harat and Kabul on the barren plains of Hindustan.

The Tīmūrid-Mughul Empire in 1527

Following the Battle of Kanwah the Mughul empire consisted of those areas Bābur himself identified after describing his achievement at Panipat, and the newly conquered areas of Hindustan. These were in his words the *vilāyat*s or provinces of Badakhshan, Qunduz, Kabul, Qandahar, and then his newly acquired Indian territories. These comprised Lahore and part of the Panjab, including strategic southern city of Multan, Delhi, Agra and Gwaliar in the heartland of Hindustan, Bayanah along with a small fringe of territory in eastern Rajasthan, some fortresses such as Koil within the region between the Jumna and Ganges rivers known as the Duab and the important trans-Ganges cities of Kannauj and Sambal. In reality his control was often limited to a small swath of territory connecting the principal fortresses or cities of these provinces and regions, and this was true of Afghanistan as well as

Hindustan. Indeed Bābur exercised only nominal control north of the Hindu Kush, where Uzbeks posed a constant threat. In 1527 Kabul was still his most secure base, and there for the moment most of his female relatives safely remained until he sent for his *kuch ve uruq*, his "family and household," in early 1529.[2]

Between 1527 and September 1529 Bābur governed this far-flung territory as two distinct regions: the "Afghān" territories of Badakhshan, Qunduz, Qandahar and Kabul, and Hindustan.[3] He and his two eldest sons ruled the Afghān *vilāyat*s, which he may have come to see by now as his "historic" territories. He designated Kabul as *khālisah* or crown land, because as he told Humāyūn in his November 1528 letter, "there had been such conquests and victories" when he was in the city.[4] Sometime in 1527 or 1528 Bābur appointed his long-time companion, Khwājah Kalān to govern Kabul, although he doesn't seem to have made his old friend's authority absolutely clear until February 1529. The reason for the confusion seems to have been due to the fact that Bābur's two eldest sons, Humāyūn and Kāmrān had been spending considerable time in the city with their many Tīmūrid relatives. In fact, Bābur ordered his female relations and their retinues to leave Kabul for India sometime in 1528, and then again more forcefully in 1529, in order to eliminate political intrigues and clarify Khwājah Kalān's authority. *Kabulning namarbutluq,* "the chaos in Kabul" has been discussed, writes Bābur in a February 10th letter to his old friend. At the same time he repeats what he had said to Humāyūn in his letter of the previous November, that he had made the city *khālisah*, and says that he has written again to both Humāyūn and Kāmrān to tell them this. Henceforth, he writes, Khwājah Kalān alone would be responsible for Kabul.

Apart from the presence of their relatives, Humāyūn and Kāmrān spent so much time in Kabul because Bābur had appointed them to govern the remaining Afghān territories. After the Indian campaign Humāyūn had returned to Afghanistan, where he

[2] BN-M, 359a.

[3] This is a convenient modern usage to designate these territories. Bābur himself doesn't identify an Afghān *vilāyat*, but identifies only those areas of Pushtu speakers as Afghanistan. He identifies the entire trans-Indus area as Hindustan.

[4] BN-M, f. 350a. He repeated his claim to Kabul in another letter to Humāyūn dated about February 9, 1529.

governed Badakhshan and Qunduz, while Kāmrān, who would have been sixteen or seventeen years old in 1525, had remained in Afghanistan in charge of both Qandahar and Kabul from late 1525 to 1527. In 1527 he governed Qandahar, and while in 1528 Bābur ordered him to Multan, it isn't clear that he went. By these appointments and in his letters it seems that with his two oldest sons at least, Bābur had begun to create a typical Tīmūrid appanage system, such as he had known in Ferghanah.

Bābur alludes to this appanage-like territorial division in his letter to Humāyūn, writing that he had always given six parts to him and five parts to Kāmrān. He thus showed the same precedence to his eldest son that Bābur had claimed for himself with his brothers Jahāngīr and Nāsir Mīrzā.[5] Humāyūn and Kāmrān were, like Bābur and his siblings, half-brothers, and within a year of Bābur's death Kāmrān began acting like his Tīmūrid ancestors, carving out his own autonomous appanage in Afghanistan and the Panjab. Bābur's two youngest sons seem to have been too young to have enjoyed any independent power in these years. His next youngest son, Askarī, born in 1517, was technically in charge of Multan sometime before September 1528, when he was called to Agra and then sent on campaign to the east.[6] Bābur's youngest son, Hind-al, born in 1519, was apparently kept in Kabul until 1529, when he was briefly sent north to replace Humāyūn and represent the Tīmūrids in Badakhshan. Shortly afterwards Bābur apparently ordered him to India but he arrived in Agra only after his father's death in December 1530.

Except for Bābur's large-scale division of his conquests into appanages for his sons, little is known about the actual operation of his administrative and revenue systems. No extant sources are known that document any aspect of Bābur's government, much less demonstrate how his rule and that of his son, Humāyūn, may have differed from that of his Afghān Lūdī predecessors—or the Afghān Surī successors who expelled Humāyūn and ruled north India between 1540 and 1555. Nonetheless, certain things may be inferred about the culture or orientation of the early Tīmūrid-Mughul state from Bābur's narrative and other writings.

At the level of military and political control Bābur ruled Hin-

[5] BN-M, f. 349a.
[6] BN-M, f. 339a.

dustan in these years through a typical post-conquest military feudalism, although some cities or forts, districts and provinces were declared crown lands, with *dīwān*s or financial officers appointed to oversee them. These latter included Kabul, certainly Delhi and Agra, although these cities are not explicitly identified, and lesser towns such as Bahlulpur on the Chenab river, almost due north of Lahore, Dulpur, nearly due south of Agra, and later in 1529, territory in Bihar worth 22,500,000 *tangahs*.[7] Most conquered territories were granted as military fiefs to Bābur's *beg*s or lesser officers to support themselves and their own men, and in this early transition period they were frequently moved from one fort to another as needed. In the *Vaqā'i'* he doesn't use technical terms for these Indian *amīr*s other than the generic Indo-Muslim term *wajhdār*, the "holder" *dār* of a *wajh* or territorial assignment. This typifies his habit of using local terminology rather than applying technical terms common to other regions; his earlier categorization of *orchin*, *tuman* and *parganah* is an example of his care in this matter. When he refers to *wajh* Bābur probably meant grants similar to *tiyūl*. When, for example, he allotted lands in Kabul, Bābur reports that they were given *tiyūl-dik*, "as *tiyūl*."[8] However, he never explains the exact rights and responsibilities of *tiyūl* or *wajhdār* grants,[9] probably assuming they were well known to his readers. Yet his actions demonstrate that he regarded the *wajhdār* grants as temporary or conditional territorial assignments given for the dual purposes of territorial consolidation and military stipends. These assignments were evidently distinct from the *soyurghal* grants that Bābur made to members of the *'ulamā* in India, although in this case too it is difficult to make any firm conclusions as only a few of these documents have survived.[10]

[7] BN-M, fs. 255a for Bahlulpur, 305a for Dulpur and 367b and 375b for Bihar. He doesn't specify Delhi and Agra, but those cities would immediately have been declared *khālisah*. Otherwise this is almost certainly not an exhaustive list, but merely those places Bābur mentions. Bābur doesn't mention the currency, but he is presumably referring to silver *tangah*s,

[8] BN-M, f. 144a. In the text he uses *tiyūl* for the last time when alluding to the holdings of one of his *beg*s in Laghman. See BN-M, f. 241b.

[9] The term *wajhdār* was still being used in the early years of the reign of Bābur's grandson Akbar. For an example see Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, "A Farmān of Akbar (1558) from the Period of the Regency," in Irfan Habib ed., *Akbar and His India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 266-7.

[10] Iqbal Husain, "Akbar's Farmāns—A Study in Diplomatic," Habib ed., *Akbar and His India*, 66.

Usually Bābur appointed Tīmūrids, Chingīzids, in-laws and long-time companions to govern the most important forts and provinces. These companions were often intermarried with one another's families. Thus, the ruling inner circle continued to be composed of a relatively small social web of Turco-Mongol aristocrats, and while this did not, as has been seen, guarantee their loyalty, it offered the most reliable governing body under early sixteenth century circumstances. After Panipat, for example, Bābur immediately ordered five trusted men to seize the treasury in Delhi. These included his brother-in-law, Mahdi Khwājah, Bābur's son-in-law, the Tīmūrid Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā and one of Sultān Husayn Bayqara's former amīrs and another of Bābur's brothers-in-law, Sultān Junayd Barlās. Later in the fall of 1526 Mahdī Khwājah was later made *shiqdār* of Bayanah with a revenue of seven million; after Kanwah he became fed up with India and returned to Kabul.[11] However, his son, Ja'far Khwājah was given Etawah and his nephew Rahimdād, was assigned the strategic Gwaliar fortress. Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā served with Bābur continuously and in May 1529 after the eastern campaign "was given" Jaunpur, a strategic and historically important city north of Banaras. Sultān Junayd Barlas, who had previously been assigned to Dulpur in August 1526, and then Jaunpur in January 1527, was moved from Jaunpur to Chunar just upriver from Banaras in May 1529. After Kanwah the critically important town of Kannauj was given to Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā. Koil or Aligarh was given to Kichik ʿAlī, a former retainer of Sultān Muhammad Ways. He was also a man who had fought with Bābur in Ferghanah.[12]

While almost nothing is recorded of the actual operation of the financial and legal institutions of the Tīmūrid-Mughul government in the first three years of its existence from 1527 to 1530, Bābur's ideas about or inclinations toward taxation and legal/religious institutions are well-known. In his *Mubaiyin* text he essentially reiterated Hanafī Sunni taxation and financial policies, such as those described in the *Hidāyat*. The fact that this latter text was

[11] *Shiqdār* was an important local administrative and revenue official in the early Tīmūrid-Mughūl period. It was later replaced by the term *karorī*. See Irfan Habib's discussion of the term in his article "Three Early Farmāns of Akbar, in Favour of Rāmdās, the Master Dyer," in Irfan Habib ed., *Akbar and His India*, 275-76.

[12] For Kichik ʿAlī see BN-M, f. 113b.

already known in Indian Muslim scholarly/religious circles meant that Bābur's ideas were part of a common cultural heritage of Central Asian and South Asian Sunni Muslims. It is important to note that when in the *Mubaiyin* Bābur discusses agricultural taxation, he explains *both* taxation in kind and taxation in cash based upon land measurement, the *jarīb*. In particular, his explanation of these two types of agricultural taxes suggests that the common interpretation of financial/administrative history of north India in the sixteenth century may not be accurate to the extent that it suggests that the Afghān Shīr Shāh began taxation in cash based on land surveys or that Akbar's later policies were especially new—at least in principle. As S. A. Azimdzhanova has argued, "It may be suggested that the system of taxation, outlined by Bābur in the *Mubaīyin* formed the basis of the tax policies of his successors in India. The measures of land taxation were identical to these, which were written about in Bābur's time."[13] Either Bābur or Humāyūn may have actually initiated these measures. A similar point might be made about the oft-made assertion that it was Shīr Shāh who began laying out the great north Indian roads known in the seventeenth century, as it is obvious from Bābur's memoirs for 1528 that before his death he began the process of at least measuring the road between Agra and Kabul. And despite the dearth of autobiographical or documentary sources for Humāyūn's rule between 1530 and 1540, it cannot assumed that he did not continue and/or institute his father's policies. That is, at the level of policy at least, it is more reasonable to assume a continuity between the period of Bābur and Humāyūn, and those of Shīr Shāh and Akbar, rather than to imagine, as is commonly done, a complete lack of connection between Bābur's embryonic empire and his Afghān and Tīmūrid-Mughul successors.[14]

In suggesting the type or nature of state that Bābur envisioned and at least tentatively began constructing during his brief tenure

[13] Azimdzhanova, *Gosudarstvo Babura v Kabule i Indii*, 144. See especially Chapter XII, "The Taxation Policy of Babur," where she adds: "From the Mubaīin it is evident that the method of levying taxes based upon the measurement of land was well-known in the time of Bābur." Ibid., 144.

[14] As one of many examples of the historiography that ignores Bābur entirely see M. Athar Ali, "Towards an Interpretation of the Mughal Empire," in Herman Kulke ed., *The State In India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 263-77.

in Agra, it is impossible to underestimate his known commitment to a Turco-Mongol court patronizing Perso-Islamic literary and artistic culture and a Hanafī Sunni Muslim administration based on the Samarqand and Harat models. What he praises in Samarqand and Harat he sought to replicate in Agra. His preferences are unmistakable in his enthusiastic welcome of Tīmūrids and Chingīzids to India and praise for the religious scholars, literary intellectuals and artists of the two great Tīmūrid cities. The arrival in late 1528 of new Turco-Mongol refugees and such individuals as Khwāndamīr and other scholars and artists from Harat indicates that Bābur and his successors were supplied with the sophisticated human infrastructure for the creation a worthy successor state to that of Husayn Bayqara. His careful enumeration of visitors and gifts at a celebration in Agra in December 1528 offers some of the most tangible evidence of the kind of people he thought worth mentioning to his audience. These included, of course, Ahrārī Naqshbandīs, the type of restrained, establishment sūfīs that most of his descendants also preferred. Bābur, thus, was not a radical figure in the context of either Tīmūrid or north Indian Muslim culture and politics, but a lineal descendant of Ulugh Beg and Husayn Bayqara.

Rajputs and Afghans

When Bābur resumed his pacification campaign in the late fall of 1527 he had secured a fragile toehold of sovereignty administered by members of his inner circle and sometimes assisted by Afghāns such as Dilāwar Khan, the son of Daulat Khan, and Nizām Khan, formerly of Bayanah. The fundamental problem involved in the integrally related tasks of subduing the country and taxing it was the inadequate number of reliable troops at Bābur's disposal, which in 1527 must still have been pitifully few. This was probably true even if Afghāns are included, most of whom Bābur did not and reasonably could not trust. As he knew from many costly experiences he could scarcely even rely on his own immediate retinue for any length of time. Then there was the problem of the foreignness of the army. Apart from their numbers most Tīmūrids and Mongols did not know Indian languages, although they could presumably speak Persian with many Afghāns, although not, surprisingly with Daulat Khan, the former ruler of Lahore.

In 1527, therefore, and throughout the remainder of his life, Bābur's conquests represented an insecure Tīmūrid-Mughul garrison state that relied almost entirely on long-time family loyalists for its tenuous power. Some Afghāns and Rajputs may have been cowed, but they had no reason to be loyal. Unlike Ferghanah where Bābur and his men had long-standing ties and cultural identity with the predominantly Turkic population, in India they were and would long remain foreign conquerors without even the significant settlement base that their Afghān rivals enjoyed. Constructing a Tīmūrid state in densely populated Hindustan required unrelenting military effort, as well as attention to affairs in Kabul, Qandahar and Badakhshan. In fact, the history of the years after Kanwah demonstrate how extraordinarily difficult it was to move from victorious battle to stable, widely accepted, that is legitimate rule. During the next two years Bābur persisted in his efforts to expand his fragile Indo-Afghan state with campaigns against the Rajputs in Chandiri and the Afghāns in the Gangetic valley, all the while wishing he were back in Kabul at gatherings with Khwājah Kalān and other boon companions.

After spending Ramadan in Agra and ʿĪd in Sikrī, where he fell ill for seventeen days, Bābur resumed activity in late August, 1527 as he toured Dulpur, where he characteristically began tidying up the disappointingly flat and geometrically chaotic landscape by ordering a stonemason to carve out a pool from a large block of red sandstone. According to his daughter, Gulbadan Begim, writing more than a half-century later, he had originally intended to fill a ten by ten foot well he ordered constructed there with wine, but as he had renounced drink, he filled it with lemonade instead![15] Bābur says nothing of this possibly apocryphal story himself, perhaps a reflection of the different interests of Bābur and his female relatives. Returning to Agra where he was sick again for nine days in September, he then set out to inspect Koil in the Duab region north of Agra, and Sambal, the important trans-Ganges town north-northeast of Koil and due east of Delhi.

Arriving in Koil on September 28th he and his men toured the

[15] HN, f. 12a. Elizabeth B. Moynihan discovered the remains of Bābur's construction in Dulpur and describes this "Lotus Garden Palace" in her illustrated article, "The Lotus Garden Palace of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Bābur," Oleg Grabar ed., *Muqarnas* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 135-52.

area for two days, and after crossing the Ganges they spent another two days touring in the neighborhood of Sambal. Then in what seems to be an anecdote in which he recalled his still youthful energy and spirits Bābur remarks that as they were riding back to Agra before dawn on October 6th, "On a pretext I split off from the men and galloped to within a *kurūh* of Agra. Later the men overtook me. We dismounted in Agra at *namāz-i pīshīn*, the noontime prayer."[16] Riding alone in the relatively cool early morning air of October probably was such a delightful sensation that Bābur recorded it in his diary, the form of the *Vaqā'i'* for this period. His recollection of the exhilaration he felt by going off alone, a solitary pleasure that many people recall first from their own childhood, offers yet another small example of the simple and easily recognizable pleasures that humanize Bābur throughout the text and is found particularly often in seemingly offhand recollections in the unrevised diary sections of the *Vaqā'i'*.

There is an artful but apparently unintentional contrast between Bābur's evident pleasure with this ride and the next entry in the *Vaqā'i'*, his description of intermittent chills and fever he began suffering a week later on October 13th. While he alludes to earlier illnesses Bābur makes relatively few references to his health in narrating events before 1527. He must have been very sick this October, perhaps with dysentery, because not only does he recall his thirst and sleeplessness, but he also mentions that while ill he composed "three or four *rubā'ī*." One of these he quotes in the text and the others are found in his *dīwān*. All of them artfully describe his illness in ways that again illustrate how much more comfortable writers of the age felt conveying their emotions in verse rather than in prose. Echoing his prose account, the first two lines of the quatrain read:

جسميمدا ايسيتمه كوندا محكم بولا دور
كوزدين اوچا دور اويقو جواخشام بولا دور
*

Daily the fever in my body intensifies,
Sleep flies from my eyes as night arrives.[17]

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[16] BN-M, f. 331a.
[17] BN-M, f. 331b, Köprülü no. 191, p. 327 and Yücel, no. 319, p. 263.

In the two other *rubāʿī* written at this time Bābur evocatively recalls the effect of this fever in words that are painfully immediate to those who have suffered the debilitating effects of dysentery, whose paired symptoms are the dehydrating effects of diarrhea and high fever. One of them reads:

کونکلومدا اوت و اکی کوزومده سو دور
مین خسته غه رحم قیل حالیم بو دور
غم کوندوزی و فراق شامی ینکلیغ
کون و تون منکا نی قرار و نی اولتورور

*

Fever in my heart and water in my two eyes,
Pity my sickness, this is my condition.
Burning during oppressive days and troubled nights,
For me neither rest nor sleep, day or night.[18]

Yet despite his increasingly frequent illnesses Bābur resumed campaigning in the second week of December, 1527. During the next two years he conducted major campaigns against Rajputs and Afghāns, and as he moved down the Ganges against Afghāns, he tried to establish suzereignty over the Muslim ruler of Bengal. Meanwhile a new Safavid victory over the Uzbeks in September 1528 seemed to open the way to Mawarannahr again, and Bābur gave Humāyūn carte blanche to campaign for the Tīmūrid homelands from his base in Afghanistan. Nothing came of the latter opportunity, and it retrospect it seems to be the earliest example of the revanchist nostalgia for the Central Asian Tīmūrid homelands that marked Tīmūrid-Mughul history until the disintegration of the dynasty in the eighteenth century.

In Agra, though, Bābur turned back to Rajasthan to conduct what he describes as a *ghazā*, a war for the faith, against the formidable Rajput fortress of Chandiri. He does not explain his reasons for this campaign against a fortress located about 175 miles due south of Agra, and one hundred miles south of Gwaliar. The Lūdīs themselves had gained control of this region only in 1515, to lose

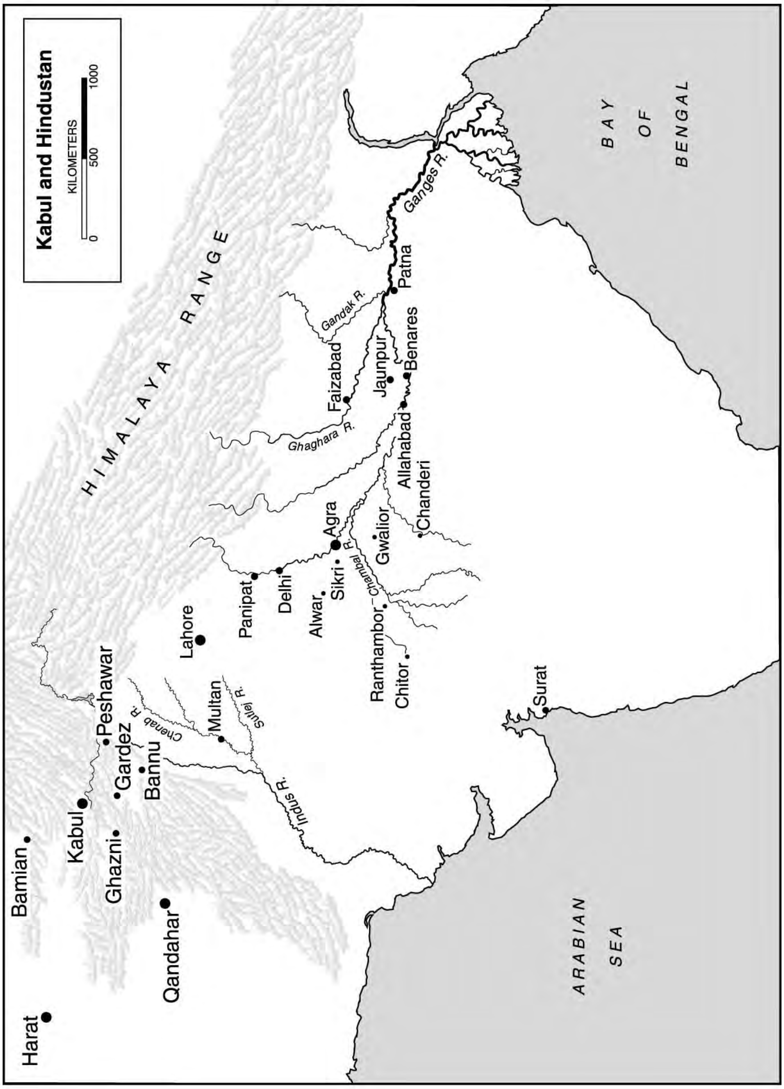
[18] Köprülü no. 190, p. 326, Yücel no. 328, p. 263, and *Rampur Dīwān*, f. 17a.

it a short time later.[19] However, it seems certain that Bābur chose to attack in this direction because in 1527 Rānā Sangā had controlled Chandiri through one of his feudatories, Medinī Rāo, who, Bābur writes, had brought 12,000 men to the battle of Kanwah. That this attack was part of a larger strategy to destroy the Rajput's power is also implied when Bābur latter remarks after describing his conquest of Chandiri that he had planned to seize Chitor itself, Rānā Sangā's principal fortress.

He marched out of Agra on December 12th southeast along the Jumna river, moving alternately by horse or boat until reaching Kalpi, more than a hundred miles downstream to the southeast. Simultaneously he detached troops to intimidate and if necessary attack the Afghān Shaykh Bāyizīd Farmūlī, who had joined him after Panipat and been given more than fourteen million *tangah*s and the province of Oudh.[20] Bābur believed that Shaykh Bāyizīd was giving signs of repudiating his new Tīmūrid overlord, and in fact by early 1528 he was actively campaigning against Bābur along the Ganges near Kannauj.[21] At Kalpi Bābur turned to the southwest and marched along the Betwa river, meanwhile dispatching 6-7000 of his troops to ride ahead to Chandiri. He and the remainder reached the region of Chandiri on January 18th.

In military terms Bābur's description of the march is interesting partly because his army had already begun to undergo a marked transformation. First, based upon his own estimates at least, he was now campaigning with at least as many troops as he commanded at Panipat, while simultaneously dispatching others to the east on subsidiary campaigns against Afghāns. He could not have mobilized so many men without incorporating Indians into his army, and one Shaykh Gūran, who had joined him after Panipat and fought with Bābur's army at Kanwah, was among commanders he sent ahead to Chandiri. Apart from this Indianization or at least incorporation of Afghan-Indian troops, the Tīmūrid army had also acquired an artillery arm that began to influence his campaigns. He brought with him to Chandiri a mortar that required the roads to

[19] Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, 323. Bābur summarizes the recent history of the Chandīrī fortress. BN-M, fs. 333a-b.
[20] BN-M, f. 296b.
[21] BN-M, f. 336a.



Map No. 4. Kabul and Hindustan

be widened and flattened for its passage. Hauling this cumbersome weapon through the jungles near Chandiri slowed the pace of the army, which now moved at the pace of elephants that pulled the mortar. The employment of elephants represented a third major change. These huge, intelligent animals seemed to be an irresistible temptation for rulers in India, whatever their own origin. The elephant was already being incorporated into Tīmūrid-Mughul forces more generally, mimicking their use by the Lūdīs and other indigenous powers. Bābur notes that he had assigned ten to Muhammad ʿAlī Jang Jang, whom he had just detached eastward to confront Shaykh Bāyizīd Farmūlī.[22]

Arriving at Chandiri Bābur first attempted to negotiate with its commander, Medinī Rāo, offering his good will and another fortress if he surrendered Chandiri itself. He entrusted these negotiations to Shaykh Ghūran and another Indian, evidently an Afghān, Arāyish Khan, who had joined him before Panipāt in January 1526.[23] The latter, Bābur, remarks, knew Medinī Rāo. After these negotiations failed Bābur and his men began the seige of the fortress on the morning of January 28th. Prefaced by three or four ineffective shots from Ustād ʿAlī Qulī's single mortar, the seige was conducted in the same basic formation of right and left wing, right and left flank of center and the royal *tābīn* that Bābur first described for the battle of Qandahar.[24] Surprisingly he took the formidable fortress with relative ease—Bābur himself was obviously surprised, as he estimated 4-5,000 men defended its walls. Of course there is no reason to accept this estimate more than any other. His men scaled the walls and seized both the outer walls and the inner fortress within two hours and without severe fighting. They did so, he says, even before the standards could be arrayed or the drums beaten to signal the general assault.

Many men within followed Rajput custom of *jauhar*. They stripped naked and fought to the death, some later killing one another after having already slain their own wives and other women. Scenes representing these killings are subsidiary parts of the miniature painting illustrating this battle in the late sixteenth

[22] BN-M, f. 332a.
[23] BN-M, f. 261a.
[24] BN-M, fs. 334a-b. The mortar shells evidently bounced off the high stone walls of the fortress.

century Persian translation of the *Vaqā'i'*. However, many Rajputs surrendered, only to be massacred by Bābur's troops.[25] A minaret of "infidel" skulls was erected nearby and Bābur celebrated by composing his own Persian verse to include the chronogram that dated the victory.

بود چندی مقام چندیری   پر ز کفار و دار حربی [و] ضرب

فتح کردم بحرب قلعه او   کشت تاریخ فتح دار الحرب

For a time this place of Chandiri	Was *dar al-harb* and pagan-full.
I conquered its fortress in battle.	Its chronogram is *Fath dar al-harb* [934].[26]

Chandiri was assigned to Ahmad Shāh, a Khiljī Turk and the grandson of the deceased Sultān of Malwa, who had held Chandiri before his death in 1510. Bābur also ordered that 50 lacs of its revenues were declared *khālisah* or royal revenue.

Bābur then planned to attack another of Rānā Sangā's feudatories known as Silhādī, in fact a Rajput convert to Islam named Salah al-Dīn, who had also been present at Kanwah and whose son was killed in that battle. Rānā Sangā himself had died the previous year, not in battle but after the Kanwah defeat. Bābur estimated that Salah al-Dīn controlled territory that could support 30,000 horsemen, again probably an exaggeration but a reflection of the quantitative shift in scale of military operations from his Ferghanah days. His planned campaign would have taken him in an arc southwest of Chandiri to Salah al-Din's territory of Sarangpur and before marching northwest to Chitor itself, deep in the Rajasthan desert. However, just before he marched he received additional discouraging news about the force he had sent eastward to overawe Shaykh Bāyizīd and other Afghāns in Oudh. In fact, just before he had begun the seige of Chandiri he had been told that these troops of his had been defeated, abandoning Lucknow and falling back to

[25] Bābur mentions this massacre earlier, f. 272a, but doesn't include it in his description of the victory. See Beveridge's typically thoughtful discussion of this omission. BN-B, p. 596, n. 1.

[26] BN-M, f. 335a. These common chronograms were based on the *abjad* (ابجد) system according to which long vowels and consonants of the Arabic alphabet were assigned numerical values. Thus a=1, b=2, j=3 and d=4 etc.

Kannauj. He had decided, he writes, not to tell anyone in order to maintain morale before the Chandiri assault.

Now he learned that his men had also abandoned Kannauj, and he immediately turned back to the northeast towards that strategic city so near Delhi, dispatching scouts, or as he calls them, *qazaq yigitler*, to locate the Afghān troops. In the face of Bābur's rapid march they retreated back across the Ganges. A standoff ensued while Bābur had a bridge of boats built. In the meantime some of Bābur's men crossed the river in small numbers, only to be driven back by Afghāns using their war elephants, which could easily intimidate men on foot. Ustād ʿAlī Qulī began firing his mortar, getting off eight shots in one day and sixteen the next, and the matchlock men also began shooting across the river. On Friday March 1st the bridge was completed and the *tābīn* and forces from the center crossed and in a pitched battle forced the Afghāns to retire. By Saturday, writes Bābur, his men probably could have pressed home their advantage and captured most of the enemy, but he says he decided to postpone the attack until Sunday—for seemingly quixotic reason having to do with the timing of the battle of Kanwah.

"It came to mind," writes Bābur:

> That last year having left Sikrī on naurūz (New Year's), a Tuesday, intending to attack Sangā, we crushed the rebellion Saturday. This year we set out on naurūz, a Wednesday, intending to attack these rebels. If we triumphed over the enemy on Sunday it would be a singular event. For this reason no one was allowed to cross.[27]

Bābur's men crossed on Sunday morning, and just as the *naqārah* drums were sounded news arrived that the Afghāns had fled the battle field. Bābur's men later captured their baggage train about eighty miles further east but the Afghāns themselves escaped with few casualties.

What seems more providential than Bābur's carefully calculated coincidence was the arrival of a prestigious refugee, signaling the increasing flow of military aristocrats, intellectuals and religious scholars to the nascent Tīmūrid-Mughul empire. On Monday his Chaghatay cousin, Tukhta Bugha Sultān came. He was one of the

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[27] BN-M, f. 337b. Bābur mentions leaving Sikri on Naurūz, 1527 to confront Rana Sanga. BN-M, f. 315a. Other Christian and Muslim dates for Naurūz can be found in Ahmad Birashk, *A Comparative Calendar of the Iranian, Muslim Lunar, and Christian Eras for Three Thousand Years*.

sons of his uncle of the disheveled tent, Kichik Khan. Six Tīmūrid and Chaghatay women also arrived in Agra in October. Three were his paternal aunts, to whom he showed dutiful respect by riding to visit them in their new quarters.[28] About a month earlier in September 1528 three well-known representatives of Harat high culture had joined Bābur's service. Khwāndamīr, the prominent historian, the poet Maulānā Shihab al-Dīn and Mīr Ibrahim, a dulcimer player, arrived, the first of the stream anticipating the later torrent river of Persian-speaking literati and artists who would flood the Tīmūrid-Mughul court in succeeding centuries. A third distinct group of men who began arriving in India by December were Ahrārī Naqshbandīs, descendants of Bābur's hereditary sufi "saint," Khwājah Ahrār. Like Chaghatays, Tīmūrids and Harat intellectuals they were also given an enthusiastic welcome, and indeed eventually were accorded the status of religious aristocrats, some of whom married Bābur's descendants.[29]

Rajputs too became Mughul aristocrats in the late sixteenth century, and the first sign of Rajput accommodation with the new Tīmūrid power in Hindustan came in September 1528 as Bābur was touring Gwaliar. Bābur never seems to have resumed his Rajput campaign. Unfortunately there is another unexplained gap in his memoirs from April to September 1528, and so it is impossible to know whether he reentered Rajasthan in force after chasing Shaykh Bāyizīd and his Afghān allies down the Ganges. However, since the rhythm of Indian campaigning harmonized with the seasons, it is quite likely that he had returned to Agra to sit out the monsoons. It is from Agra that he rode out in late September to visit Gwaliar, still held for him by Rahimdād, the nephew of Mahdī Khwājah. At Gwaliar he received an emissary from Rānā Sangā's second son, Bikrāmjīt, the holder of the important fort of Ranthambor. Bikrāmjīt's minister, a close relation, offered his master's "good will and service," *daulatkhāhlïq ve khidmatgārlïq qabūl qilibturlar*, in exchange for control of Ranthambor and seventy lacs of revenue. However, later Bikrāmjīt's representatives asked instead for Bayanah. On October 19th he was in the process of surrendering Ranthambor, having been offered instead Chitor, if and when

[28] BN-M, fs. 344b-345a.

[29] Dale and Payind, "The Ahrārī Waqf of Kābul in the Year 1546 and the Mughūl Naqshbandiyyah," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 225-26.

Bābur was able to take that imposing fortress then held by Bikrāmjīt's brother. Bābur describes all of these negotiations in a matter-of-fact tone, never lapsing into the religious rhetoric of the *ghazā* or referring to Bikrāmjīt or any of his relatives or servants as infidels. He simply identifies them as Hindus, and speaks of their submission in virtually the same terms he uses to characterize the surrender of Afghāns. His terminology reminds readers that Bābur was a pragmatic conqueror, a man willing to exploit religious or cultural distinctions if it served his immediate purpose, but not an ideologue, certainly not a person engaged in a Safavid-like religious crusade.

Bābur left Gwaliar on September 30 and his visit concluded with relaxing intervals at seemingly every reservoir, garden and fast-running stream that evoked, however poorly in his mind, the *Chahār Bāghs* and stream-side picnic grounds of Kabul, Harat and Samarqand. On the first day of their leisurely return he and his men stopped at one of these sites atop a waterfall where they ate *maʿjūn* and listened to musicians and singers. Five days later they reached Dulpur where Bābur had ordered an octagonal pool to be carved out of solid rock three weeks earlier on his ride out to Gwaliar. Now finding that the work had not progressed fast enough he commanded that an additional 1000 stonecutters put to work to finish the pool, another small hint of the human resources that Tīmūrid rulers could command in India. After another *maʿjūn* party beside this site, they rode off late one evening toward Sikri, camping later that night along the road. Possibly because of the cold evening air Bābur again suffered from an ear ache that had plagued him since September. He had taken opium for this affliction on September 26th, although he had also, he writes, been induced to take opium because of the moonlight that particular evening, an apparent allusion to the astrological notion associating moonlight with humidity and cold.[30] Then about October 7th, reaching the garden he had earlier ordered built in Sikrī, Bābur was displeased with the work done on the garden wall and its well-buildings and so "threatened and punished" the men supervising the work. On

[30] BN-M, fs. 344 b & 340a. For a brief summary of the moon's astrological significance, including its feminine nature, see Stefano Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art* (New York, N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 11.

October 15th he and his companions reached Agra during the first watch, that is between six and nine in the morning.

Autumn 1528: Celebration of Empire

During the next three months Bābur remained in Agra, and his narrative for this period offers as much insight into his political situation and state of mind as any other comparable section of the *Vaqā'i'*. His comments reveal, first of all, that by this time he had completely exhausted the cash of the Delhi and Agra treasuries. As a result on October 22nd he ordered *wajhdār*s or stipendiaries to pay thirty percent of their stipends into the *dīwān* to provide funds for arms and supplies.[31] The acute cash shortage later sparked a debate about the direction of his next campaign, leading him to report with refreshing frankness on the fiscal realities of empire building. As he says when describing the meeting of Turkic and Indian *amīr*s held at his *khalvatkhānih* or private residence in Agra two and a half months later on January 3rd, whether or not they campaigned to the east against Afghān forces or to the west depended on whether they could capture a treasury to pay the army.[32]

Yet despite the cash crises and the threat of substantial Afghān forces operating in the eastern Ganges region, at this moment in the fall of 1528, Bābur was feeling increasingly confident about the military situation in India. Citing *farmāns*, royal edicts or pronouncements, sent to unnamed persons in Harat on October 24th, he reports writing that he was satisfied with the situation of the "rebels and infidels in the east and west of Hindustan" to the degree that he hoped to come to Kabul the following summer.[33] Three and a half months later as Bābur was marching down the Ganges he was just as confident. In a letter he wrote to Khwājah Kalān on February 9th he says again that he was consolidating his power in India and soon hoped to leave for the Afghān capital, whose pleasures he vividly remembered.[34] Perhaps Bābur hoped to

[31] BN-M, fs. 345a-b.

[32] *Khalvatkhānih* is a word connoting private quarters, sometimes referring specifically to women's rooms but not necessarily so. DKh. 6, p. 704.

[33] BN-M, fs. 345a-b.

[34] BN-M, fs. 359a-361a.

return to Kabul merely because he, like Khwājah Kalān, was sick of India's climate, not to speak of his widely advertised distaste for other aspects of India's landscape and people. His love of Kabul was and continued to be a powerful attraction. Yet he may have also had both dynastic and strategic reasons for thinking of returning to Afghanistan during the fall and winter of 1528-29.

The dynastic reasons concerned the political intrigues of his sons over the control of Kabul, which he tried to settle finally a short time later with his letter to Humāyūn and subsequent order that his female relatives leave Kabul for India. The strategic reasons concerned the balance of power between Uzbeks and Safavids, which shifted dramatically in the fall of 1528. At the time Bābur wrote to Harat on October 24th he may have feared that Uzbeks forces were about to reoccupy Harat and most of Khurasan, as they had been besieging the city most of the year. Bābur's fears about resurgent Uzbek power in the region might explain earlier, undated messages sent to the "people of Khurasan" that he alludes to in this message of the 24th, which he characterizes as *istimālat farmānlarï*, "encouraging" or "supportive." Merely the use of the term *farmān* in both messages suggests that they had some significant political content. The word *istimālat* hints, in turn, that Bābur might have promised Tīmūrids and others in Harat that he would march there if the Uzbeks seized the city and province. Given his experience in 1507 he knew that the Uzbeks could quickly move on Qandahar if they reoccupied Husayn Bayqara's former capital.

Fortunately Shāh Tahmasp, the Safavid ruler, had already reached Khurasan in the late summer, and on November 4th Bābur learned that Tahmasp had defeated a small Uzbek force on or about 16 September. Then on November 22nd he received more good news; Tahmasp had shattered the combined Uzbek army at Jam, near Merv, on 26th of September. The Safavid victory removed the immediate Uzbek threat but they may have given Bābur a new reason to return to Kabul. That is, these events must have reminded Bābur of Shāh Ismāʿīl's earlier defeat of Shībānī Khan Uzbek in 1510 and may at least momentarily have rekindled his desire to march once again on Samarqand. Yet the situation in the fall of 1528 differed markedly from conditions eighteen years earlier. Now he was slowly gaining mastery over the wealthy Indian heartland. However little he cared for the country

he was by force of circumstance evolving into an Indian ruler. Thus, while he may have been nostalgic for Kabul and still dreaming of reclaiming his Tīmūrid patrimony, he assigned Humāyūn to realize the family's revanchist ambitions.

On November 27th when he wrote to Humāyūn and Kāmrān to settle the affairs of Kabul, he also gave his eldest son tentative instructions about dividing up yet unconquered Uzbek territories in northern Afghanistan and southern Mawarannahr. His instructions represent another note about Tīmūrid-Mughul appanage politics. Humāyūn was to get Hisar while Kāmrān was to hold Balkh. He also told Humāyūn if Samarqand itself was retaken Humāyūn should remain there while Kāmrān would keep Balkh, and perhaps be given additional territories if he thought Balkh too modest. In late January just as Bābur was starting for the east he received the news that his eldest son was actually on the march north to Samarqand with an estimated 40,000 men, a number that seems, as usual, improbably large, and information that Humāyūn's allies had already taken Hisar.[35] However, nothing more is heard about this campaign, and nearly a year later, sometime in the autumn of 1529, Humāyūn was back in Agra. The remarkable ability of the Uzbeks to regroup after military defeats and/or news of his father's increasingly poor health may have convinced him to abandon the campaign.

It was probably just shortly before Bābur wrote to Humāyūn that he finally recovered from another bout of sickness, this time a serious intestinal illness. Speculation as to its original cause is a waste of time given the many possibilities, but he reports falling ill on November 6th. He suffered, he writes, from intestinal swelling accompanied by chills and fever, making it too painful for him even to pray.[36] These acute symptoms may have been caused by the medicine he took for what was apparently a more mild affliction that began late in October. It was then he began taking quicksilver, or mercury. However, the effects of mercury on the human body vary with the form or specific chemical compound injested, so it is impossible to say from his brief reference how this treatment may have affected him. Liquid or metallic mercury, that is quicksilver,

[35] BN-M, f. 356b.
[36] BN-M, f. 346a.

has very little toxic effect on humans, while many mercury compounds, such as cinnabar, may cause fatal illnesses.[37]

Bābur reports that he decided, probably wisely given current medical knowledge, that piety might cure him, and so began to versify a treatise of his deceased Naqshbandī *pīr*, Khwājah Ahrār, noting that he wrote in verse to make it easier to remember.[38] After composing ten lines of Ahrār's work, the *Risāla-i Vālidīya* each day but one, Bābur began to improve after only six days.[39] He took this to be proof of Ahrār's intercession—now for his health, earlier before Samarqand—for he recalls that when he fell ill the previous year he was sick for thirty to forty days. Lines from the preface he wrote to accompany his versification echo his prose narrative in its allusion to his problematic health and growing concern for union with god. Here he invokes Muhammad for the first time in his writings.

یا حبیب عربی قرشی
غم و دردینك منگا سادی و خوشی
....
مین بس کاهل و یول اسرو ییراق
عمر کوب قیسقه و یول اوزون راق
مین کمراه قه کورسات بیر یول
مینی مقصود قه ییتکور گای اول

[37] See Leonard J. Goldwater, *Mercury, A History of QuickSilver* (Baltimore, Md., York Press, 1972). Citing data from N.Y. in 1955 the author says that simply ingesting mercury is generally harmless, as it quickly passes through the body without being absorbed. However, some compounds of mercury are deadly. See Chapter 11, "Toxicology." Goldwater's findings are supported by I. M. Trakhtenberg in his work *Chronic Effects of Mercury on Organisms* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1974), 38 & 40. Mercury and the mercury compound cinnabar were associated with longevity by Taoists and perhaps others in Han China and later. See Joseph Needham, Ho-Ping-Yü and La Gwei-Djen, *Science and Civilization in China* 5, pt. 3, "Chemistry and Chemical Technology," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 11 & 40. Cinnabar was still being used in India in relatively recent times. Ibid., 11, n. a. Tantric Hindus also had an interest in mercury. Joseph Needham and La Gwei-Djen, Ibid., 5, pt. 5, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 277.

[38] Translated by A. J. E. Bodrogligeti as, "Bābur Shāh's Chaghatay Version of the *Risāla-i Vālidīya*: A Central Asian Turkic Treatise on How to Emulate the Prophet Muhammad," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* vol. 54 (1984), 4.

[39] BN-M, f. 346b.

قویمه بابرنی بو حرمان بیرله
چاره قیل دردیغهه درمان بیرله
*
Oh beloved [Muhammad] of the Arabian Quraish
Your grief and suffering are my happiness and joy.

I am unwell, and the road is very distant.
Life is very short, and the road is longer.
This road's map is unknown to me.
What should bring me to the goal?
Not leaving Bābur in this despair
Cure his ills with Thy means.[40]

Still, by the time he wrote to Humāyūn Bābur had recovered, and in early December he fully resumed his activities.

Whatever Bābur felt about the possibility of retaking Mawarannahr, his own growing sense of himself as an Indian, or Indo-Afghān ruler, is reinforced by other aspects of his narrative for this three month period. In mid-December "it was settled" that two of his men were to measure the distance from Agra to Kabul. At intervals of about eighteen miles they were to build distance-marking towers and at thirty-six-mile intervals they were to establish relay stations where six post-horses were to be kept ready. Further, it was "ordered" that this system was to be paid for from royal revenues, when the horses were kept on *khālisah* or crown lands, or in other cases by local *beg*s in whose *parganah* or district the horses were stabled.[41] Bābur concludes this discussion by quoting from his 1521 verse text on Islamic law, the *Mubaiyin* in which he identifies terms for various distances and describes how they are subdivided. His inclusion of Indian terminology in this part of the text is another indication of the degree to which he had turned toward Indian affairs in the early 1520's. His careful description of these terms also offers yet another illustration of his frequently expressed interest in quantification and in this case also, his knowledge of and interest in Indian measures. It also helps to remind readers of Bābur's taste for systemization, which in Tī-

[40] Yücel no. 2 pp. 97-98 and *Rampur Dīwān*, Plate 2a.
[41] BN-M, f. 351a.

mūrid-Mughul historiography is more often associated with his grandson, Akbar.

As a preface to quoting his own verse Bābur notes that the Indian measure *kurūh* was to be taken as equal to the Indo-European term *mīl* or mile, which, he writes, was the equivalent of 4000 paces. Written in Turkī verse and in verse in which the final word of each hemistich or half-line rhymed, undoubtedly made it easier to remember. The first two hemistichs, for example, end, respectively in "mil" (mile) and "bil" (know), the second in *qadam* and *tutam* and the third in *ilik* and *bilik*. Bābur does not says if he quoted this passage at his men. However, if they were illiterate such easily remembered instructions would have been another practical use for poetry.

تورت مینك دور قدم بیله میل   بیر کروه آنی هند ایلی دیر بیل
دیدیلار بیر یاریم قاری بیر قدم   هر قاری بیل که باری دور آلتی توتام
هر توتام تورت ایلیك ینه هر ایلیك   آلتی جو عرض بولدی بیل بو بیلیك

*

Four thousand paces equals a mile
Know this is what Indians call a *kurūh*.
They say one pace equals one and a half *qarï*
Know that each *qarï* in turn equals six *tutam* (handwidths)
Each *tutam* equals four *ilik* (finger widths) and further
Know this, each *ilik* equals the space of six grains of barley.[42]

His agents, Bābur writes, were to make measuring cords of forty *qarï* or approximately 120 feet to establish the distance markers and post-horse stations between Agra and Kabul.[43]

This period, and really Bābur's entire remarkable career was climaxed on the 19th of December when he held a "feast" in Agra that ritually marked the foundation of the Tīmūrid-Mughul, South Asian empire. While elements of the ceremonies he describes here such as the exchange of gifts and robing of the elite guests were common features of Tīmūrid court etiquette, what Bābur describes was not merely a feast, or even one of his favorite *suhbatārāyalïq*

[42] BN-M, f. 351b. *Kurūh* is also an Iranian term.

[43] The *kurūh* also known as *kōs* and later distance markers are discussed by Jean Delouche, *Recherces Sur Les Routes de L'Inde Au Temps des Mogols* (Paris: École Française D'Extrême-Orient, 1968), LXVII. See "Variations de la valeur de kōs," 77-81 and Planche XI "Types de kōs minār."

gatherings, but a royal or imperial celebration. The feast's significance was signaled by the attendance of Iranian, Uzbek and "Hindu" or Rajput ambassadors. Beyond these emissaries there were Tīmūrids, Chaghatay Mongols, Naqshbandī *shaykh*s, Samarqand *ʿulamā*, his own retainers and those of his children, fellow exiles from Andijan, villagers from Sukh and Hushyar near Isfarah, who had sheltered Bābur during the winter 1503-04 before he fled south through Afghanistan, and even Afghān villagers who assisted Bābur during that flight to Kabul. Even these villagers were given or, more precisely, *inʿām buldï* "had [royally] conferred" on them, *chakmanlar*, jackets or tunics, *qumāsh khilatlar*, silk robes, textiles, gold and silver [coins] and other unspecified "articles."[44]

Bābur's account of the seating of the principal guests illustrates the status hierarchy of the gathering, and Bābur is as careful to describe these seating arrangements as he is when depicting his visit to Harat more than twenty years earlier. In later Tīmūrid-Mughul history such scenes were the frequent subjects of court artists whose placement of court figures mirrored their imperial status. "I sat," writes Bābur, "on the north side of a newly built, grass-covered octagonal pavilion.

> Five or six *qarïs* to my right side sat Tukhtah Bughah Sultān [Chaghatay Mongol, son of Kichik Khan], ʿAskarī [Bābur's third son, b. 1517], the descendants of his Eminence the Khwājah [Ubaydullah Ahrār Naqshbandī] Khwājah ʿAbd al-Shahīd and Khwājah Kalān, Khwājah Chishtī [presumably a Chishtī sufi], Khalīfah [Nizām al-Din ʿAlī Barlas, Bābur's brother-in-law], and the Khwājah's dependents from Samarqand—*hāfiz*es [Quran reciters] and *mullā*s. Five or six *qarïs* to my left side sat Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā [Tīmūrid, last surviving male heir of Sultān Husayn Bayqara], Tang Atmish Sultān [Uzbek, but possibly Muhammad Zamān's relation], Sayyid Rafīʿ[?] and Sayyid Rūmī[?], Shaykh Abū al-Fath [emissary from Bengal] Shaykh Jamālī[?], Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ʿArab[?] and Sayyid Daknī [Shīrāzī, landscape architect].[45]

The *Qizīlbāsh* or Iranian ambassadors sat "seventy or eighty *qarï*s off to the right" with one of Bābur's begs and companions, Yūnas ʿAlī, the son of Husayn Bayqara's Lord of the Gate. The Uzbek ambassadors were similarly seated to the left, accompanied by Bābur's longtime drinking companion and fellow writer of off-color verse, Mullā Abdullah Kitābdār.

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[44] BN-M, fs. 352a-353a.
[45] BN-M, fs. 351b-352a.

These carefully orchestrated seating arrangements partly echoed Bābur's battle orders, with the most important and/or senior Tīmūrids and Chingīzids to his immediate right and left. Bābur's two oldest sons, Humāyūn and Kāmrān were in Afghanistan, so only his eleven year old son ʿAskarī sat to his right once removed. Perhaps because of Askarī's age the place of greatest honor immediately to Bābur's right was occupied by Bābur's maternal cousin, the son of Kichik Khan. Then on the left sat first the last Bayqarā Tīmūrid, Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā and an Uzbek and probably part Tīmūrid on his mother's side, Tang Atmish Sultān. Next in precedence on the right were spiritual aristocrats, the grandson and nephew of Khwājah Yahyā, the second son of Bābur's Naqshbandī patron saint, Khwājah Ubaydullah Ahrār. Bābur's exceptionally respectful attitude toward the Ahrārīs is made even more clear when in January another Ahrārī Naqshbandī arrived, Khwājah Abd al-Haqq, and Bābur honored him with a visit, describing it as *malāzamat qildim*, "I paid my respects."[46] As these seating arrangements demonstrate, at this moment Bābur's state was politically and religiously at least, still a Central Asian Tīmūrid empire.

In some other superficial respects Bābur's court had begun to take on the trappings of a hybrid Indo-Muslim state, outwardly marked on this occasion by staged camel and elephant fights and the performance of Indian acrobats. After the acrobats came *pātarlār*, Indian dancing girls, and about the time of the evening prayer many gold, silver and copper coins were scattered, evidently to the assembled crowd, and it precipitated what Bābur describes as "clamor and pushing."

Bābur describes one last event in which he pointedly reminds his readers of his now unchallenged sovereign status, the successful realization, finally, of his *mulkgīrliq* ambition. He remarks that "Between evening and bedtime prayers I brought five or six *makhsūslar*, special or distinguished people, to sit in my presence."[47] Prior to this time Bābur, by his own testimony, was acutely sensitive to any acts that implicitly or explicitly challenged his legitimacy, his Tīmūrid status. These ranged from his impotent anger in

[46] BN-M, f. 357a.
[47] BN-M, f. 353b.

Ferghanah, when his erstwhile allies began acting like royalty, to the Kabul period when an impudent *mardak*, arrogantly placed his seal in the center of a letter. The moment in Kabul in 1519 when he urged one of his men to act less formally to allow for a gayer "gathering" offers a flash of insight into his normal practice of maintaining a social distance from his men even while he was in such close physical contact as he fought, drank and wrote poetry. Perhaps even in Kabul the close-knit camaraderie of earlier *qazaqlïq* days had already begun to give way to greater "splendid" royal isolation, especially after he proclaimed himself *pādshāh* in 1506, although this cannot be inferred from the *Vaqā'i'*. Whatever had been his practice before Panipat, his summoning of favored men into his "presence" in December 1528 and the vocabulary he uses to describe this audience in his memoirs, reveal the incipient and probably inevitable evolution of protocol from the cameraderie of a snow-bound cave on the march back to Kabul in December-January 1506-07, to the increasingly rigid court ceremonial of his Tīmūrid-Mughul descendants.

Perhaps it was sometime in December 1528 that Bābur wrote the *rubā'ī* in which he also celebrated the north Indian winter season, one of the most delightful times of the year in the subcontinent.

قیش کرجه زمان منقل و آ ش دور
لکن بوشتاء هندته کوب دلکشدور
هنکام نشاط و بادهء بی غش دور
می بولماسه معجون داغی بولسا خوشدور
*

Winter, although a time of the brazier and the fire,
Yet this winter in India is very amiable.
A season of pleasure and pure wine.
If wine is not permissible, yet ma'jūn is also fine.[48]

Anyone who has wintered in north India and awakened to the smell of wood smoke in the crisp, sunny mornings will understand Bābur's delight, a feeling that is evoked in the later pages of Rudyard Kipling's charming romance, *William the Conqueror*, as the

[48] Yücel no. 335, p. 264 no. 195 and Köprülü no. 197, p. 327.

hero and heroine return from duty in the humid Indian south to the crisp winter air of the Panjab. "Morning brought the penetrating chill of the Northern December, the layers of wood-smoke, the dusty grey-blue of the tamarisks, the domes of ruined tombs, and all the smell of the white northern plains."[49]

Still this is one of the few poems that Bābur included in the *Rampur Dīwān* in which Bābur celebrates India. It is one of the ironies of this period in Bābur's life that just after he presided over his imperial celebration, he completed the *Dīwān* whose poems collectively offer a bleak personal counterpoint to his political triumph. Collectively these verses convey shades of alienation, isolation and depression. In the first *rubāʿī* listed just after proclaiming that he had become a *ghāzī*, Bābur writes, thinking perhaps both of Khwājah Kalān's departure and his tenuous political situation in 1527:

اندین بری کیم بیار و دیاریم یوقتور
بر بحظه و بر نفس قراریم یوقتور
کیلدیم بو ساری اوز اختیاریم بیرله
بارماقته ولیك اختیاریم یوقتور
*

Since I have neither friends nor districts,
I have not one moment of repose.
It was my choice to come here,
Yet I am not able to go away.[50]

The spirit of this *rubāʿī* is magnified in the only *ghazal* Bābur includes in the *Dīwān*, and which, as a result, cannot be precisely dated. Yet it so nearly echoes the just-quoted *rubāʿī* that it could have been written around the same time—or anytime between 1527 and 1528. This is another occasional poem in which he openly plays on the idea of *ghurbat*, the term used in his 1502 *rubāʿī* recited in Tashkent and so often employed in verse to describe separation from the beloved. Here he reflects on his sense of *ghurbat*, separation or exile from friends—probably Khwājah Kalān and others in Kabul. Bābur begins the *ghazal* by invoking both *ghurbat*

[49] Rudyard Kipling, "William the Conqueror," *In the Vernacular: the English In India* Randall Jarrell ed. (New York, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1963), 135.
[50] Yücel no. 319, p. 260 and Köpülü no. 181, p. 326.

and the nearly synonymous *hajr* or *hajrān*, separation or abandoning friends and country. The first line probably refers to the fasting of Ramadan.

غربت ته اول ای هجری مینی پیر قیلیب تور

هجران بیله غربت منکا تاثیر قیلیب تور

*

In exile this month of abstinence ages me,
Separated from friends exile has affected me.

Then after lines in which he rues his fate, and says he does not know whether he will remain on "that" or "this side," apparently referring to Kabul or Ferghanah versus India, Bābur then poignantly speaks about his love-hate feelings for India in the typical lyrical vocabulary of the *ghazal*, with the India the "friend" of the final line.

بو هند ییری حاصلی دین کوب کونکل آلدیم

نی سود که بو ییر مینی دلکیر قیلیب تور

سیندین بو قدر قالدی ییراق اولمادی بابر

معذور توت ای یار که تقصیر قیلیب تور

*

I deeply desired the riches of this Indian land.
What is the profit since this land enslaves me.
Left so far from you, Bābur has not perished,
Excuse me my friend for this my insufficiency.[51]

Evidently reinforcing his sense of social isolation was his regret at renouncing drink, which of course he associated with the *suhbat ve subatārāyalïq* gatherings during the old days in Kabul. Alluding to the oath that he had taken to ensure a victory at Kanwah he writes in a poem placed in the *Dīwān* shortly after the quatrain just quoted above:

می ترکنی قیلغالی ایرور مین غم لیق

بار تیره کونکولکا هر زمان درهم لیق

[51] Stebleva, no. 119, p. 327, Yücel no. 124, p. 190, and see also Azimdzhanova, 49-50.

غم بیرله فسرده لیق هلاك ای ی مینی
می بیرله ایمیش شادلیق و خرم لیق
*

I am grief-stricken at abandoning wine.
Darkening my heart, I am always in a confused state.
Frozen in grief I am lost.
With wine I am cheerful and smiling.[52]

After expressing these sentiments Bābur wrote a second quatrain expressing his *pirīshān* or agitated state after giving up wine, then openly concluding in the fourth and final line, "I have renounced wine and now regret it!"[53] The likely dating of these poems to 1527—and their association with his old social life—is suggested both by their placement in the *Rampur Dīwān* and because he quotes this latter *rubāʿī* in a letter he wrote to Khwājah Kalān in Kabul in February 1529, in which he says that two years earlier his craving for wine was so great he was on the verge of tears. In this letter, though, he tells his old friend that he no longer craved wine, and that Khwājah Kalān should also take the oath of temperance.

Shortly after this his mood seems to become even darker, evidently reflecting the sickness, loneliness and regret he alludes to in less artful and affecting words in the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. Much more than the memoirs these poems powerfully convey feelings of exhaustion, despair and perhaps even the paranoia of old age. One of these *rubāʿī*, which based upon its placement in the *Dīwān*, was written presumably sometime in 1528, is perhaps the darkest of the entire collection.

نی یار وفا قیلغوسی آخر نی حریف
نی صیف و شتا قایغوسی باقی نی حریف
یوز حیف که ضایع اوتادور عمر عزیز
افسوس که باطل بارادور وقت شریف
*

[52] Yücel no. 322, p. 261 and Köprülü no. 184, p. 326.

[53] Yücel no. 323, p. 261 and Köprülü no. 185, p. 326. Bābur quotes the second of these in the *Vaqāʾiʿ* in his narrative for February 1529 when discussing the problem of temperance. Yet he obviously wrote it earlier, as it is included in the *Rampur Dīwān*.

Finally neither friends nor companions will be faithful.
Neither summer and winter nor companions will remain.
A hundred pities that precious life passes away.
O, alas, that this celebrated time is futile.[54]

The Last Campaign

Less than two weeks after completing and dating the *Rampur Dīwān*, Bābur finally decided to ride west in search of lucrative but unnamed treasuries he desperately needed to replenish his funds. The largess that he had distributed during his imperial celebration on December 19th must have made his fiscal situation even more desperate than it had been in late October. He felt he couldn't attack Bengal, the only substantial treasury in the east, because its Muslim ruler, Nusrat Shāh, had declared his loyalty. In any case "some places on the western side were both close and had treasuries," an observation then repeated in an unattributed Turkī verse.

مالی وافر ایلی کافر یول یاووق   شرقساری کر یراقتور اول یاووق

Abundant wealth, pagan people, a short road. While the eastern road is far,
This is near.[55]

His narrative for this period seems to reflect the uncertainty he and his men felt. On the one hand he had already sent his son Askarī off with substantial forces to the east on December 12th, saying he would follow if necessary.[56] Three weeks later on January 3rd he and his men somewhat hesitatingly decided to march west, while anxiously waiting for intelligence and keeping open the option to reverse course.[57]

As was so often the case, though, the campaign began in a leisurely fashion. Bābur crossed the Jumna on the 8th and arrived in Dulpur a short time later. Camping in the *Bāgh-i Nīlūfar* or Water-Lily Garden, he typically occupied himself again by further

[54] Yücel no. 330, p. 263 and Köprülü no. 192, p. 327.
[55] BN-M, f. 355a.. As Bābur does not claim these verses and because they do not appear in his *Dīwān* they were presumably written by one of his companions.
[56] BN-M, fs. 350a-b.
[57] BN-M, f. 355a

working to recreate his Central Asian or Afghān environment. Assigning places around the garden for his *begs* and *ichkhi*s to construct gardens and pavilions for themselves, Bābur ordered a *hammām* constructed with a ten-by-ten pool inside. This idyll was interrupted just at that moment when news arrived that Iskandar Lūdī's son and Ibrahim Lūdī's brother, Mahmūd, had taken Bihār, by which he evidently meant the wealthy Gangetic province with Patna as its capital.[58] The sudden and obviously unanticipated resurgence of a seemingly unified Afghān force prompted Bābur to abandon his improvements at Dulpur and return immediately to Agra.

On January 21st he and his *beg*s decided to march southeast down the Ganges and they crossed the Jumna the same day, camping first in the *Bāgh-i Zarafshān*, the "Gold-Scattering Garden," possibly named after the Zarafshān river that flows by Samarqand. The army moved slowly east for two and a half weeks while Bābur conducted unfinished business. The Bengali ambassador from the province's Muslim ruler, Nusrat Shāh, was received—first according to Hindustan custom, then kneeling three times in Tīmūrid fashion. The ambassador's arrival was probably connected with the many Afghāns who had fled east into his kingdom, an issue that preoccupied Bābur as the campaign continued. Uzbek ambassadors who had attended the celebration in December were then formally dismissed. However, according to his account, Bābur gave most of his attention to relations with his sons and relatives in Kabul

On February 1st he wrote letters to accompany gifts sent to Kāmrān and Humāyūn—for Kāmrān's marriage and the birth of Humāyūn's son. Kāmrān was married to a daughter of the important but non-Chingīzid Mongol, Sultān ʿAlī Begchik, one of the clan who had both served Bābur at Qandahar and betrayed him at Hisar.[59] Bābur also included letters of the alphabet of his new "Bāburī" script in a message to his young son Hind-al in Kabul, who also received copies of Bābur's poems.[60] Humāyūn also re-

[58] BN-M, fs. 356a-b. There was a town of this name also, located about 40 miles southeast of Patna. See Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, map 10a.

[59] BN-M, f. 346a. The Begchik was one of the Mongol tribes listed by Haydar Mirza.

[60] For this script, often believed to be lost, see Ahmad Gulchin-i Maʿānī, "Mushaf-i Bāburī," *Namah-yi Āstān-i Quds* Vol. 20 (1344/1965), 60-64 and for a

ceived copies of Bābur's Indian poems, as did Kāmrān and Khwājah Kalān. He also sent a copy of the Turki translation of Khwājah Ahrār's he had versified to all three sons and his old friend, Khwājah Kalān. In other letters addressed to Humāyūn and Kāmrān and sent on February 9th, he proclaimed once again that Kabul was to be *khālisah* land and repeated his earlier order for his wives and females relatives to come to India. A day later he also wrote a long letter to Khwājah Kalān, which he copied into his narrative because, as he says, "it makes some circumstances known."

Bābur's letter to Khwājah Kalān is one of only three complete letters he includes in the *Vaqā'i'*, and it is the last extended statement of his personal feelings and political concerns. Bābur himself implies he included the letter in the text just for this reason, and he probably wrote this section of his memoirs in the 1530 monsoon season, when he apparently fell ill for the last time, leading to his eventual death in December 1530. It is a remarkable document in which he mixes the personal and the political, openly discussing his emotions but also demonstrating a preoccupation with the minutiae of rule. The letter, which typically discusses garden construction, also includes both poetry and an off-color joke. It encompasses the man in so many ways it is worth honoring Bābur's own intent and quoting it in full.

> Saying salām to Khwājah Kalān, the message is this. Shams al-Dīn Muhammad [the messenger from Kabul] has reached Etawah [and] affairs have become known. Our desire to go to those places is immense and boundless. Hindustan affairs are coming to some kind of resolution [and] with God Most High, the hope is such that with God's grace things will soon be arranged. After managing this work if God wills, I shall set out immediately. How can a person forget the pleasures of those lands? Especially for such a one who has become repentant and abstinent [from drinking wine], how can [such] a person blot from the mind such legally sanctioned pleasure as melons and grapes. In time a melon was brought. Cutting [and] eating [it] had a strange effect; I was consumed with tears.[61]

discussion of the Quran Bābur wrote in this script see Ali Alparslan, "Bābur'un icad ettiği //Bāburī yazısı// ve onunla yazılmış olan Kur'an," *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 18 (1976), 161-8. I am indebted to Professor E. J. Mano of Kyoto University for the former reference.

[61] Paragraphs have been imposed on the text for ease of reading.

Kabul's chaotic affairs have been written of [to me]. On this account [after] thinking it was decided that if there were seven or eight governors in one province how could [things] be contained and controlled. Given this situation I summoned my elder sister and wives to Hindustan. I made all Kabul province and its villages *khālisah* [crown land]. I also wrote to Humāyūn and Kāmrān in this sense. A trustworthy person must take these letters to the *mīrzās* [Humāyūn and Kāmrān]. I also previously wrote in exactly this sense and sent [letters] to the *mīrzā*s. Perhaps it is already known. Now there remains no word or excuse about the safety and prosperity of the province. After this if the fortifications are not strong and the people are not prosperous or if there are no provisions or the treasury is not full, it will be charged to the Pillar of the State's ineffectiveness [to Khwājah Kalān].

Some necessary things will now be specified. In some cases an order has already gone out. One of these is you must add to the treasury. The necessary things are these: repair of fortifications, provisions, lodging and stipends for arriving and departing ambassadors. You must spend money legally taken from revenue for the congregational mosque building.[62] Then, repairs to the caravanserai and the *hammām*, completion of the half-finished, baked-brick building done by Master Hasan ʿAlī in the *ark* [citadel]- after consulting about this building with Master Sultān Muhammad you must order a suitable design. If the former plan made by Master Hasan ʿAlī still exists you must complete it exactly in that manner. If not after consultation you must erect a nicely designed building so that its floor is level with the floor of the *dīwānkhānah* [audience hall].

Then, the Khurd Kabul dam, which is to be built on the Butkhak river where the gorge opens out toward Khurd Kabul. Then, repair of the Ghazni dam. Then the *Bāgh-i Khiābān* [the Avenue of Trees Garden] and the avenue, for which there is too little water, it is necessary to buy and divert a one-mill stream. Then, on the southwest side of Khwajah-Bastah I diverted the Tutamdarah stream atop a small rise, constructed a pool and planted saplings. As it stood opposite the ford and had a nice view it was called the *Nazargāh* [the scenic view]. Here also it is necessary to plant good saplings, well-planned lawns, [and] alongside the lawns, beautiful and fragrant flowers and sweet-smelling herbs.

Then, Sayyid Qāsim has been assigned to assist. Then, you must not neglect the condition of Master Muhammad Amīn Jibachi and the matchlockmen. Then, the minute this letter arrives you must take

[62] Annette Beveridge in a typically insightful note suggests that this phrase "legally taken from revenue" may refer to the creation of a *waqf* or endowment in which funds are permanently alienated to support a religious or charitable institution.

my elder sister and wives and go as an escort to Nilab [Indus]. It is imperative that in the same week when this letter arrives you all must definitely leave however much they delay, both because the troops that have gone from Hindustan are suffering in unpleasant quarters and also because the province [Kabul] is being ruined.[63]

Then, it was written in a letter to Abdullah that it had been very unsettling to reside in the vale of repentance. This *rubāʿī* partly explains the difficulty.

می ترکینی قیلغالی پریشان دور مین
بیلمان قیلور ایشیمنی و حیران دور مین
ایل بارچه پشیمان بولور و توبه قیلور
مین توبه قیلیب مین و پشیماندور مین
*

Renouncing wine, I am confounded,
I know not what to do and am bewildered.
People become penitent and repent,
I now am penitent for having repented.[64]

A bon mot of Bannāʾī came to mind. One day in ʿAlī Shīr Beg's presence Bannāʾī offers a bon mot. ʿAlī Shīr Beg, who was evidently wearing a jacket with buttons, says [in Persian] "You have made a rare bon mot. I would have given you my jacket but the buttons cannot be ignored and are a hindrance." Says Bannāʾī [in Persian] How can the buttons be a hindrance; the loops [female's openings] are the hindrance." [in Arabic] "The veracity rests with the story teller." You must excuse so many bon mots. Please God, you must pay no attention!

Then, that *rubāʿī* was recited last year. During the past two years the craving and longing for a *chaghïr-majlisi*, a wine-party, has been so intense and overwhelming that from the longing for wine I was brought to the edge of tears. This year, thank god, that inclination has completely left the mind. Probably the good and blessing came

[63] Bābur must be referring to the family intrigues and political dissension in Kabul that he mentions earlier, as he is so insistent that his female relatives leave Kābul for India. The women included Khānzādah Begim, whom Bābur abandoned in Samarqand in 1501, and now the wife of Mahdī Khwājah and Shahrbānū Begim, Khānzādah's half-sister and now wife of Sultān Junayd Barlās. There were also family members of Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā and Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā. See HN, Introduction, pp. 18-19.

[64] BN-M, f. 360b, Yücel, no. 323, p. 261 and Köprülü, no. 185, p. 326.

from versifying the translation [of Khwājah Ahrār's *Walidīyah*]. You also must repent. Gatherings and wine are delightful with friends and boon companions.[65]

کیم بیله صحبت توتقای سیز کیم بیله چاغییر ایجکایسیز

*

With whom will you hold *suhbat*? With whom will you drink wine?

*

If your friends and boon companions are Shīr Ahmad and Haydar Qulī such renunciation should not be difficult. Conveying best wishes, salām.

Written Thursday, the first of the month of Jumāda al-akhīr [February 10th]

"At the time," Bābur recalls, "writing these words of advice affected me profoundly." Presumably he is referring to the nostalgic emotions it aroused, rekindling his desire to return to Kabul, its wonderful climate and the company of Khwājah Kalān and other friends. Quite apart from the effect it had on him the letter is a evocative in so many ways, first of all illustrating the multitudinous preoccupations of a pre-modern ruler. His solution for the stability of Kabul, evidently threatened by squabbling among his sons, and typically detailed instructions about the repairs to buildings and even architectural plans, are useful reminders both of his extraordinary energy but also the stamina and unrelenting attention to detail that a pre-modern empire builder needed for his kingdom to survive and prosper. Even the slightest inattention could quickly lead to the unraveling of the imperfectly subjugated realm. Based on his frequent allusions to letter writing Bābur probably dispatched hundreds if not thousands of similar documents as he struggled to maintain control over his relatives and conquests. He also alludes to verbal messages that he had sent with the courier.

On the personal side the poem and commentary have a Tolstoyean quality in their evocation of religious consciousness struggling with sensual nature, documenting the recognizable conflicted emotions of a man trying to adhere to an ethical ideal by reigning in his natural instinct for pleasurable companionship fueled by

[65] BN-M, fs. 360b-361a.

drugs and alcohol. The two lines of the letter prior to the last verse are an especially delightful demonstration of the contradictions between what Bābur writes and what he obviously felt, at once urging his old friend to repent, while then concluding with a nostalgic longing for what he has just said he no longer desired. Then too the entire story about Navāʾī shows Bābur's earlier commitment to renounce ribald poetry was itself more a pious public wish than an actual fact. Actually, it is quite possible that Bābur did not really make that commitment until just before he fell critically ill, and then inserted it earlier in the text, a kind of spiritual backing and filling as preparation for the next life. Finally, the entire passage might also be seen as an especially evocative illustration of the tension between the Iranized Turco-Mongol aristocrat and the observant Muslim.

Bābur spent the next four months campaigning against the newly allied Afghān coalition led by Sultān Mahmūd Lūdī.[66] Having left Etawah on February 9th he marched slowly southeast down the Jumna, rarely covering more than 10 kurūh or about twenty miles a day. Much of the march closely followed the campaign of the previous year, which was also undertaken at almost exactly this time of year.[67] Now accompanying him were two of his Chaghatay Chingīzid cousins, Aisan Temür Sultān as well as his brother Tukhtah Bughah Sultān. Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā was also a member of the expedition, adding to its Tīmūrid-Chingīzid character. By February 26th the army reached the Ganges at Karrah district, just one or two marches from the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges at Allahabad. Forces nominally led by his son Askarī joined him there on the opposite or northeastern bank of the river. While camped here Bābur received news that a lac or "100,000 Afghāns" had joined Sultān Mahmūd Lūdī, including such men as Shīr Khan Sūrī, whom Bābur had enrolled in his service less than a year earlier. This latter Afghān was eventually to defeat and displace Humāyūn in 1539 and 1540. However, these figures are as wildly exaggerated as other such reports, as Bābur himself demonstrates later in his narrative, for as his forces moved further

[66] Bābur specifically writes later that the only purpose of the campaign was to attack "rebel" Afghāns. BN-M, f. 375b.

[67] The narrative for 1528 breaks off in early April and doesn't resume until September, 1528.

southeast toward Allahabad in early March Sultān Mahmūd Lūdī's troops abandoned recently captured Banaras and fled further east. Little more than a month later Sultān Mahmūd is described as having merely two thousand men.[68]

By late March, as they moved further southeast towards Bihar, news arrived that his female relatives had finally left Kabul; as he learned later they had left on January 21st, the same day he had marched east from Agra.[69] A few days later Bābur heard that Mahmūd Khan was now camped on the border of Bihar at the Son river, and the army pressed on to the southeast, reaching Ghazipur by 30 March. At Ghazipur Bābur received homage of one Afghān *amīr* and letters from several others. As Bābur was trying to win over individual Afghān *amīr*s he was also trying to force Nusrat Shāh of Bengal to join with him in opposing Sultān Mahmūd, or at least to stand aside while Bābur pursued his Afghān enemies. The Bengālīs were threatened with unstated but evil consequences if they stood in the way of Bābur's force.[70] Nonetheless, the subsequent and only major battle that Bābur's men fought during this campaign was against Bengālī forces blocking their way just upstream from Patna at the confluence of the Saru and Ganges rivers.

On April 28th Bābur fortified the high ground commanding the confluence of the rivers with his mortar and matchlockmen and then set about crossing the Ganges to engage the Bengālī forces on the southeast side. Over the course of the next seven days various units of Bābur's force crossed by boats or by fords or simply swam their horses across, while Bengālīs tried to cross to attack Bābur's army. By May 5th Bābur's forces had defeated the Bengālī army without, it seems from his narrative, a very large loss of life on either side. His Chaghatay cousins, or as he calls them "the Sultāns," acted with conspicuous bravery and were subsequently rewarded with substantial land assignments—the inconspicuous Indian denouement of the Chaghatay Mongol state. The battle, or really a series of small if deadly skirmishes, bore little resemblance to the epic clashes at Panipat and Kanwah, but for the moment at least it removed any serious threat on Bābur's eastern borderlands.

Bābur achieved two specific goals with this victory—prefaced by

[68] BN-M, f. 367a.
[69] BN-M, f. 380b.
[70] BN-M, fs. 368b-369a.

his earlier threats against Nusrat Shāh in Bengal. First, by the middle of May a significant number of Afghān *amīr*s pledged their loyalty and more soon followed. A few who had done so earlier in letters Bābur received at Ghazipur on March 31st, now came in person.[71] Some of these men had drifted into and out of cooperation with Bābur since he had taken Lahore in January 1524.[72] Many of them were Lūhānīs or Nūhānīs, whom Bābur sometimes distinguishes from Afghāns, perhaps because they were well known merchants and long-distance traders.[73] By May 16th an estimated 7-8000 had joined Bābur *bilah umīdvārlïq,* "with expectations," as he candidly describes their motives.[74] Some leaders were given substantial cash or land grants in yet another attempt to attach them to the Tīmūrid-Mughul state. Then three days later on May 19th Bābur's emissary to Nusrat Shāh returned and reported that the Bengali ruler had acceded to his demands. Bābur then observes that:

> "Because this *yurush* was done to repel rebellious Afghāns [and because] some of these rebels had taken themselves off and some accepted service [and because] the rest who remained were in service with the Bengali, who had received them [and because] the monsoon was imminent, we too therefore wrote and dispatched peaceful words about the previously stated conditions."[75]

Two days later other Afghān *amīr*s submitted to Bābur leaving only a few major figures still defiant. By Monday May 23rd Bābur's mind was, he writes, "at ease concerning Bihar and Bengal."[76] In fact, as Bābur himself undoubtedly knew, he had taken only the first step in extending his influence in the region, an influence that at this time had no lasting basis apart from military campaigns. It was not until Akbar's reign that Tīmūrid-Mughul authority was firmly imposed in the eastern Ganges valley.

Bābur was still concerned with one other Afghān, Shaykh Bāyizīd Farmūlī, whom he had been trying to capture or defeat the previous year. However, as he prepared to turn his army back

[71] BN-M, fs. 365a-b.
[72] See fs. 255b-257b where Bābur discusses 'Ālam Khan's abortive seige of Sultān Ibrāhīm Lūdī in Delhi in 931 a.h./1524-25.
[73] See BN-M, f. 375b where Bābur speaks of "Nūhānīs and Afghāns."
[74] Ibid., f. 375b.
[75] BN-M, fs. 375b-376a.
[76] BN-M, f. 376a.

towards Oudh where Bāyizīd was known to be camping, the first monsoon storm hit, making it clear that the campaign season was indeed nearly over. His description of the monsoon's sudden arrival evokes a powerful memory and even nostalgia in those who have experienced the dramatic onslaught of a monsoon storm. Often preceded by a sunny, partly cloudy afternoon, then immediately prefaced by an abrupt silence, the winds suddenly pick up and as Bābur writes with accurate and evocative language describing the onset of the storm:

> That evening after the *taravīh* [prayer] it was the fifth *garī* of the first watch when the monsoon clouds boiled up. Within an instant an intense storm began. A powerful wind arose so that all but a few tents were flattened. I was inside the royal tent writing. There was no chance to gather papers and sections. The tent and its portico fell right on my head. The tent's ventilation flap was shredded. God [Tengri] intervened; there was no injury. Book and sections were completely soaked and collected only with difficulty. Placing [them] on a woolen coverlet we piled kilīms on top. Two *garīs* later it quieted down. Erecting the bedding tent, a candle was lit. Starting a fire after much difficulty we kept busy until dawn drying possessions and sections [*uruq ve ajzā'*][77]

The "papers," sections and book Bābur mentions quite likely included drafts of his own memoirs, but also letters he was constantly sending throughout his expanding dominions. While some of the missing sections of his memoirs may be due to this storm or similar unrecorded events, it is far more likely they were lost when his son Humāyūn fled resurgent Afghān forces in India in 1540.

During the next month Bābur was in fact preoccupied with running Shaykh Bāyizīd and his companion, Bibān, to ground. However, the details of this ultimately unsuccessful pursuit are less significant in the long term than the likelihood that the commander who killed several of Shaykh Bāyizīd's men and came closest to capturing him was the individual who erected the now infamous "Bāburī *masjid*" at in Oudh or Ayodhya. This man, Bāqī Beg Shighavul, a Turco-Mongol from Tashkent, had been in Bābur's service for some time. Bābur had previously sent him on a mission to Balkh, but in 1529 he commanded forces in and around Lucknow and had been assigned lands there as well. Bābur released

[77] BN-M, f. 376b.

him from service in late June, and it may have been then that he presided over the construction of the mosque that according to the inscription, was built at Bābur's command. Bābur does not mention the building or indeed the construction of any other religious architecture, apart from the repair of buildings in Kabul, and he is known to have personally ordered or patronized the construction of only two other mosques, at Panipat and Sambal.[78] However, in the inscription inside the mosque Baqi Beg records that he built the mosque at Bābur's order:

بفرموده شاه بابر که عدلش   بنایست تا کاخ گردون ملاقی

By the order of Bābur Shāh whose justice * Is an edifice touching the heavens' very heights.

It is impossible to resolve the question of Bābur's role in the construction of this mosque which, as late sixteenth century Tīmūrid-Mughuls knew, was constructed on a site sacred to Hindus, using materials from a temple.[79] The inscription does not mean that Bābur necessarily ordered the construction, although if he didn't he must have formally given his approval for it to be built. One thing can be said for certain about Bābur's form of imperialism and that is, as has already been noted, he did not carry on a religious crusade in India. Nor did he, on the overwhelming evidence of the *Vaqā'i'*, write for the approval of the *'ulamā*. It certainly was not unheard of for Muslims or indeed members of other religions—to build on sacred sites or use materials from sacred buildings. The Quwwat al-Islam mosque in Delhi is an early example. However, in lieu of new evidence coming to light, there is simply no way to prove why this particular mosque was built.

Bābur's own religious preoccupation, to the extent that he had any, is represented by another inscription on the outside of the mosque, now partly obliterated, one line of which reads, "Celebrated in the world, Bābur *qalandar*."[80] Having himself presented

[78] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 1991), 32. The construction of this mosque and the temple apparently destroyed to build it are at the heart of the late twentieth, early twenty-first century Indian political/communal controversy over the so-called Babrī masjid. For a discussion of Muslim temple desecration/destruction see Richard M. Eaton, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim states," in David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence eds., *Beyond Turk and Hindu* (Gainsville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), 246-281.

[79] See below, "Epilogue."

in public as a *qalandar*, that is as an ascetic, wandering sūfī may be only a typical royal conceit, playing on the hoary theme of the worldly shāh as spiritual beggar—and it is very likely he knew of and approved this inscription. Nonetheless, it reminds readers of the *Vaqā'i'* that while Bābur repeatedly discusses gardens he has visited or constructed he never mentions commissioning mosques or any other religious architecture.

In both the Afghān and Indian sections he publicizes piety only in association with sūfīs. In the Afghān narrative he first alludes to his reverence for sufis when describes how he protected an unidentified sufi shrine at the mouth of the Sakhi Sarwar pass in March 1505. Then again in the course of describing his seemingly endless series of "gatherings" in 1519 he mentions circumambulating the tomb of one Khwājah Khwānd Sa'īd, almost certainly a sūfī, and very probably a Naqshbandī, in an area where Khwājah Ahrār and his descendants held considerable lands and buildings as *waqf* endowments.[81] Immediately after Panipat he also circumambulated the Chishtī shrine in Delhi. Earlier in this campaign of 1529 he took the time to visit the shrine of another Chishtī *pīr*, Shaykh Yahyā located at Manir, near the confluence of the Son, Ganges and Saru Rivers, just upriver from Patna. Here also he reports *tawāf* or circumambulating the shrine of this man whose son, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn (d.1380/81), wrote religious works later popular with Bābur's grandson Akbar.[82] Bābur's care in describing his reverence for sūfī shrines in India reprise his earlier expressions of respect and sometimes intensely felt spiritual connection with the deceased Naqshbandī *pīr*, the Tīmūrid "patron saint," Khwājah 'Ubaydullah Ahrār. This respect, as has been mentioned, was so great as to elevate Khwājah Ahrār's descendants to the status of an aristocratic religious lineage suitable for intermarriage with the Tīmūrid house in India.

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[80] Cited in BN-B, Appendix U.

[81] BN-M, f. 241 and Dale and Payind, "The Ahrārī Waqf in Kābul in the year 1546 and the Mughūl Naqshbandiyyah" 218-33.

[82] AN, III, 132-33. Akbar sent money to this shrine while campaigning in precisely the area Bābur traversed in 1529. It is Annette Beveridge who first called attention to this connection in one of her many informative notes. BN-B, p. 666, n. 3.

The "Conspicuous Conjunction"

By late June the monsoons had fully set in and Bābur, having failed to capture or kill Shaykh Bāyizīd, ordered a return to Agra. "As the monsoons had arrived and since after five to six months campaigning the troops, horses and pack animals were worn out," Bābur and an unspecified number of his men set off for the capital. Riding ahead of his baggage and guns, Bābur covered about thirty-two miles on Tuesday evening, June 21st. Then between Wednesday morning and Thursday evening when he and his men dismounted in the *Hasht Bihisht* or Eight Paradises garden in Agra, they covered about 125 more miles. Moving this fast in the monsoons is impressive enough, but it also shows that however many illnesses Bābur may have suffered in India in the past few years in June 1529 he was not worn out yet but still a healthy, campaign-hardened man.[83] He may have rushed back so that he could welcome his wife Māhīm Begim, Humāyūn's mother, and other female relatives, who finally arrived there two days after him around midnight Saturday, June 25th.

Bābur repeatedly records how deferentially he treated his female relatives, going to visit them rather than expecting them to pay court to him. He showed such respect to only two other groups, sūfīs, especially Ahrārī Naqshbandīs and Chishtīs, and to Tīmūrids and Chingīzids. He mentions visiting some of his aunts on Friday, the day after he returned from this campaign. Many other of his female relatives had come earlier, others arrived in Agra slightly later, eventually a total of ninety-six according to his daughter Gulbadan, who gives their names in the course of describing a feast held after Bābur's death.[84] Surprisingly, though, here he only notes the arrival of the women from Kabul the following day, and then records no events at all for the next ten days. During at least some of those days however, he spent time greeting and visiting his wife and other newly arrived relations, as his Gulbadan records in her memoirs, written at the request of Bābur's grandson, Akbar, more than fifty years later.

[83] See BN-B, p. 686 n. 1 where Beveridge estimates the distance and makes the point about Bābur's health.

[84] HN, fs. 11a & 25b.

Gulbadan, a young girl of five or six at this time, probably remembered some of these events herself, particularly meeting her father for the first time since she was two years old in Kabul. Yet like the young Haydar Mīrzā she more likely was reminded or informed about most of them afterwards by others, in her case by the women of the now imperial household. Gulbadan, who writes or dictates a simple but formal Persian or who had written or dictated from her native Turkī and had it translated, came with her foster-mother Māhīm and ahead of her sisters and the rest of the Kabul entourage. Bābur did not learn of their approach until they had reached Koil/Aligarh, and before he knew it they had pressed on to within a few miles of Agra.

> At *namāz-i shām*, the evening prayer, a person came [and] said [to Bābur] I passed her excellency two *kurūhs* [four miles] back. His excellency my father could not bear to wait for a horse to be brought but set out on foot and found [her] in near the *khānah* [tent] of Māhīm's *nanachah*. My lady wished to dismount. My father the Pādshāh did not allow this and walked before my mother until [reaching] her own *khānah*.[85]

Some three months later by Gulbadan's estimate, the remainder of the women arrived in Agra from Kabul. These included Bābur's elder sister, Khanzādah Begim, whom Bābur had abandoned in Samarqand to Shībānī Khan in 1501. Among them also was Zaynab Sultān Khanïm, a daughter of Mahmūd Khan Chaghatay and Muhibb Sultān Khanïm, a daughter of Kichik Khan Chaghatay. Two of Muhibb Sultān Khanïm's brothers were already fighting with Bābur. While these women had been ordered from Kabul primarily for political reasons, the gathering of all of them together in Agra must still have been an extraordinary emotional climax in Bābur's life.

With their arrival he had finally gathered around a large number and perhaps the majority of the Tīmūrids and Chaghatays who had survived the debacle of the Uzbek conquest. If the state reception the previous December symbolized his extraordinary political tri-

[85] HN, f. 13b-14a. *Nanahchah*, a diminutive form of *nanah*, perhaps here an elderly female relative. There are many aspects of this scene that are not clear from Gulbadan's sketchy Persian narrative. It seems likely from this and the following passage that the women and their escort had camped just north of Agra late Saturday night, perhaps intending to enter the city in a ceremonial procession the next day.

umphs, the arrival of these women was a social event of equal significance. All of his female relatives received houses, lands and gifts "And in the period of four years that he was in Agra," Gulbadan continues, "he went each Friday to visit his paternal aunts," whose own fathers and brothers had died or been killed.[86] It isn't clear if Gulbadan's comment is meant to reflect Bābur's preference for his paternal relatives and long-harbored resentment towards members of his mother's family. Nonetheless, he was now the center of a newly constituted Tīmūrid-Chaghatay galaxy and it is hard to believe no metaphorical poetry was written to celebrate this social constellation. If this had been a more established court with a full retinue of panegyric poets, some writers almost certainly would have manipulated Timur's title, *Sāhib-Qirān*, the lord of the fortunate conjunction, that is of Jupiter and Venus, to eulogize the man who had restored Tīmūrid fortunes.[87] In retrospect, the possible astronomical/astrological metaphors seem staggeringly numerous. Such poems may have been written—and lost.

This 1529 monsoon season in June, July and August was perhaps and for a time the most idyllic period of Bābur's life. His family was gathered around him and no major power immediately threatened his Indo-Afghān state, although he mentions some kind of unrest in Lahore in July and an incipient rebellion by Rahīmdād, Mahdi Khwājah's nephew, in Gwaliar during July and August. Unfortunately his own account of these summer months is quite sketchy, and his memoirs break off for the last time after an entry for September 7th. He was probably writing this section when he fell ill, eventually fatally so, the following year. His narrative is supplemented only in part by Gulbadan's memoir, Haydar Mīrzā's history and, probably unreliably, by Akbar's court historian Abū'l Fazl more than a half-century later.

[86] HN, f. 11b. Gulbadan later lists thirty-eight women some of whom she identifies as Māhīm Aga's paternal aunts, and some as Gulbadan's paternal aunts. Then she lists other Tīmūrid and Chingīzid women who sat on Humāyūn's right HN, fs. 24b-25b.

[87] The title *Sāhib-Qirān* first given to Tīmūr referred to the astrological idea that the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus was a fortunate birth date. See T. W. Haig, "Sāhib-kirān," EI2, VII, 832-33 and P. Kunitzsh, "al-saʿdān," in *Ibid.*, 716. The idea that certain planetary conjunctions determined turning points in history is particularly attributed to the ninth century a.d. Muslim astrologer Abu Mashar. See Peter Whitfield, *Astrology, A History* (New York, N.Y.: Henry Abrams, 2001), 90. For an example of the Greek and Indian horoscope of Bābur's grandson, Akbar, see AN, I, 69-128.

Bābur apparently spent the time as he had done the previous summer while waiting for the rains to abate, living in gardens in and around Agra as he received emissaries, conducted state business and wrote the *Vaqā'i'*. Among other things he ordered the arrest of two men in Lahore and sent threatening messages to Rahīmdād in Gwaliar, who by September apparently thought better of rebelling. Bābur also supervised his Agra garden, newly planted with melons and grapes by a gardener named Balkhī, perhaps an indication of the northern Afghān origin of these fruits. However, these plants were obviously experimental ones, for he also sent 150 porters to Kabul to bring his favorite grapes, melons and other fruit to India.

Gulbadan writes that after spending three months in Agra Bābur went to Dulpur, the site of one of his favorite gardens, the Lotus Pavilion, taking his wife Māhīm Begim and Gulbadan with him.[88] From there he moved to Sikri, presumably to stay in the *Bāgh-i Fath*, the garden of Victory, where he had spent the last day of Ramadan in 1527. In Sikri, Gulbadan reports, Bābur ordered a large platform to be constructed in the middle of a reservoir, where he would sit or row about in the surrounding pool. While in the garden itself he spent part of his time in a pavilion he had built, a *chaukandī*, "where he sat and wrote the book," by which Gulbadan presumably means the *Vaqā'i'*, which she had read before composing her memoirs.[89] Then he returned to Agra, perhaps in early September, in time to welcome the arrival of his sister, Khanzādah Begim, and the rest of the Kabul women.

It seems dramatically fitting that Bābur's relations with his family should be the best documented aspect for the remaining year and a half of his life. During the fall and winter he must have been preoccupied with Humāyūn's actions, although neither he nor Gulbadan mentions his son's abrupt departure from Badakhshan and unexpected arrival in Agra sometime in the late summer or early fall of 1529. Haydar Mīrzā, however, was an eyewitness to events that unfolded in Badakhshan after Humāyūn's departure, although by the time of Bābur's death he had retired back to Yang-

[88] Bābur spells this site/village Dulpur. In Gulbadan's Persian text it is given as Dhulpur.

[89] HN f. 15a. There seems no reason to question the universal assumption that Gulbadan is referring to his autobiography here.

i Hisar in the Altï Shahr country just east of Kashgar.[90] Humāyūn, who on the evidence of Bābur's narrative had repeatedly irritated or offended his father—by his late arrival with Badakhshan troops in 1525 and by plundering the treasury in Delhi on his way back to Kabul and Badakhshan in 1527—now acted so as to endanger Bābur's control of the strategic Badakhshan region. He suddenly left Afghanistan sometime in the summer of 1529.[91]

According to Haydar Mīrzā, the local Badakhshan leaders panicked because they felt that Humāyūn's abrupt departure left them vulnerable to Uzbek attack. Apparently without informing them, Humāyūn sent his younger brother Hind-al from Kabul to the Qalah Zafar fortress in Badakhshan. However, before Hind-al arrived they invited Haydar Mīrzā's uncle, Saʿīd Khan Chaghatay, to Badakhshan, but when he arrived at Qalah Zafar he discovered Hind-al had already arrived. He asked that some districts be given to him and his uncle to support themselves during the winter, which had already set in, but Hind-al's advisors did not trust them and refused.[92] Implying that he had no other choice, first Haydar Mīrzā and then his uncle decided to plunder the surrounding countryside.[93] They did so despite the close family relationship between Haydar Mīrzā, his Uncle, Saʿīd Khan, and Bābur—they were cousins through Yūnas Khan—and despite Bābur's earlier hospitality to both of them in Kabul. However, as Haydar Mīrzā says, they may not have had a choice if they were to survive, and near the end of the winter, presumably now March, 1530, they abandoned the country and retired due east over the mountains to Yarkand in the Altï Shahr. They may have left because the Khan was seriously ill or because Bābur by this time had protested their

[90] TR-T, fs. 214a-b.

[91] At least this seems the most probable period of his departure. Abu'l Fazl's cut-and- paste historical account drawn from several sources says that Humāyūn arrived in Agra after his mother, Māhīm Aga, and that after spending some time with his parents went off to his fief at Sambal, about eighty miles due west of Delhi. When dating Humāyūn's arrival in Agra he only cites Haydar Mirza's comment that Humāyūn arrived there in 935 a.h. 1528-29. AN, I, p. 272.

[92] Haydar Mīrzā says he arrived in the Iranian month of Dey, that is January 1530. TR, f. 296.

[93] TR, f. 214b. Haydar Mirza writes that after finding Hind-al in the fortress and asking but receiving no grant of territory during the winter "In the end it was decided to plunder. Until the Khan (his uncle) arrived [from Kashgar] I did so around Qala Zafar."

actions, invoking family connections and his previous hospitality shown to both men in Kabul years earlier.[94] In any event Bābur eventually recalled Hind-al and sent to Badakhshan instead Sulayman Shāh Mīrzā, son of Ways Khan Mīrzā and the grandson of Mahmūd Mīrzā, long the Tīmūrid ruler of the region in pre-Uzbek days.

Bābur says nothing in the last pages of his memoirs about Humāyūn's precipitate departure from Badakhshan and sudden arrival in Kabul. He may not have learned the details of what happened until Humāyūn's arrival In Agra.[95] Humāyūn may have decided to come to India after hearing about his father's illness the previous year. If so he would have naturally wished to be present to guarantee his own succession if Bābur suddenly died. His mother, Māhīm Begim, may also have encouraged him to come. Nor does Gulbadan allude to Afghān events. She does not even describe Humāyūn's arrival in Agra. However, before even mentioning her older step-brother she tells a story she obviously heard later from other women that may reflect Bābur's declining health, but might equally be apocryphal and a later ratification of Humāyūn's accession. In Gulbadan's tale a few days after Bābur had received his sister and the other Kabul women he, his wife Māhīm and some others visited the *Bāgh-i Zarafshān*, the "gold scattering garden," and while there he said *"dil-i man az saltanat ve bādshāhī giriftih,* " I am heavy hearted over rule and kingship." Then in her account he continued on to say I shall retire to the *Bāgh-i Zarafshān* with a servant and "give the kingship to Humāyūn."[96] A short time later, though, Bābur with some of his women left again for Dulpur by boat.

The pages of Gulbadan's memoir that deal with this last year and a half of Bābur's life, are from this point on entirely given over to stories of illness and death. She says that a "few days" after Bābur's declaration in the *Bāgh-i Zarafshān* her own natural mother, Dildār Begim, fell into inconsolable grief when her son,

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[94] TR, f. 214b.

[95] If Haydar Mirza is correct then the latest date for Humāyūn's arrival in Agra would be 5 September 1529, the end of year 935 a. h.

[96] HN, f. 15b. The phrase Gulbadan uses when she quotes Bābur's wish to retire to the garden, "*gulshih binishinam*," implies Bābur was retiring from the world as a kind of religious recluse.

Ālwar Mīrzā, died after falling ill with an otherwise undefined *dard-i shikam* or "stomach/intestinal pain." Ālwar Mīrzā was in a sense her only son, for while she had earlier given birth to Hind-al, he had been given to Māhīm Begim, who, at the time of Hind-al's birth, had lost several children and not yet given birth to Humāyūn. In 1519 after learning Dildār was pregnant, she had asked Bābur to give her Dildār's child whether it be a boy or girl, and he agreed.[97] Perhaps he did so because Gulbadan's mother already had at least one surviving daughter and she was younger than Māhīm, subordinate to the older woman and likely to bear more children in the future. Gulbadan does not say whether she grieved for a son or simply for a beloved child. She only remarks, that when Dildār's anguish exceeded all limits Bābur took the Māhīm Begim and unspecified other women off to Dulpur by boat, perhaps sailing first southeast down the Jumna and then crossing overland to the Chambal river for the rest of the short trip southwest to his Lotus Garden.[98]

"At this time," Gulbadan continues with her sombre account, news came from Delhi that Humāyūn had fallen seriously ill. The time that Gulbadan mentions was probably late in monsoon season of 1530. Humāyūn had evidently been staying in Delhi rather than at his fief at Sambal, where Bābur had ordered him to go after Humāyūn had refused to return to Afghanistan.[99] Māhīm Begim then set out to meet her only natural son, who had already left for Agra, probably by boat, if he was as ill as the chronicles suggest. She met him at the river town of Mathura, and from there, writes Gulbadan, "Both, mother and son, like Jesus and Mary, set out for Agra," where Gulbadan met them.[100] As he grew weaker, Gul-

[97] BN-M, 220a. However, this story is found only in the Kazan edition of Bābur's text, and, Annette Beveridge believed, may have been added to the manuscript later by Humāyūn. See the discussion of this episode by E. J. Mano, *Bābur-Nāma (Vaqāyī*ʿ), II, *Concordance and Classified Indexes*, xxvii-xxviii and by Beveridge, BN-B, Appendix L.

[98] HN, f. 16a. Gulbadan says that "they sat in a boat" and went "happily and peacefully by water."

[99] The estimates of dates are based largely on Haydar Mīrzā's narrative and Abū'l Fazl's history, the *Akbar nāmah*. Abū'l Fazl says that Humāyūn spent six months at his Sambal fief after Bābur dismissed him from Agra, where he stayed for an undetermined time after his precipitate arrival from Badakhshān. AN, I, 275.

[100] HN, f. 16b.

badan recalls, Bābur grew more concerned, only to be told by Māhīm Begim in a seemingly bitter observation, and perhaps genuinely reported because of its remarkable tone:

> "You are unconcerned about my son. You are *Bādshāh*; what grief do you have? You have other sons. I am grieving because I have but a single son.[101]

To which Bābur replied, writes Gulbadan, "Although I have other sons, none do I love as much as your Humāyūn..... [and] I want the state and rule for the beloved son Humāyūn, and not for others."[102]

Navigating the shoals of Gulbadan's aged memory and her seemingly artistic impulse to tell a compelling story leaves any reader uncertain about the truth of the complex emotions on display here, feelings in which parental love might either have been intensified or muted by political ambition.[103] Māhīm Begim was probably distraught about the health of her only son and yet also ambitious for him and concerned about her own future if he did not survive to succeed his father. There is good reason to believe that Humāyūn was Bābur's chosen heir, even if he had often criticized him and could designate one of his three other sons. Bābur had already made his preference publicly clear in his letter to Humāyūn that he includes in the *Vaqā'i'*. Not only does he carefully instruct Humāyūn in the discipline of kingship but he assures his eldest son that in his father's eyes he had precedence over his brothers. Given the lack of definitive succession rules among Turco-Mongols it would have been unusual if his brothers, other Tīmūrids or powerful nobles had not thought of contesting the new and still fragile Tīmūrid-Mughul state at Bābur's death. However, later theories that he might have preferred another successor, most notably Husayn Bayqara's grandson, Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā, are based on little more than hearsay and inventive speculation.[104] They may have been stimulated by Bābur's criticism of his eldest son and the knowledge of Humāyūn's 1539 and 1540

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[101] HN, f. 17a.

[102] Ibid., f. 17b.

[103] Ruby Lal examines the significance of Gulbadan's fascinating memoir in her article "Rethinking Mughal India, the Challenge of a Princess's Memoir," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38, 1 (January 4, 2003), 53-65.

[104] They are summarized, with her usual care, by Annette Beveridge, who supports the idea that Bābur may have preferred Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā. BN-B, 702-08.

defeats by Shīr Khan Sūrī, who then drove him from India and replaced the nascent Tīmūrid-Mughul state with a new and remarkably effective Afghān kingdom.

Gulbadan Begim was, in any event, the only one present during the last months of Bābur's life who has left a record, and she sketches a religious tableau in which Bābur and Humāyūn are the principal figures. In fact her account, beginning with the evocation of Jesus and Mary, suggests she was intentionally presenting her story as a parable. Her brief and sometimes confusing story of these last few months of Bābur's life is simply this. That during Humāyūn's seemingly critical illness Bābur circumambulated his son's bed and eventually offered up a sacrificial prayer, saying,

> If a life may be exchanged for a life I who am Bābur bestow my life and soul on Humāyūn. That very day *Firdaus Makānī* [Resting in Paradise—Bābur's posthumous name] became ill and Humāyūn poured water on his own head, came out and gave an audience. And due to his illness they carried his excellency the *Bādshāh*, my father, inside. He remained bed-ridden for two to three months.[105]

Gulbadan then implies that Humāyūn left Agra unaware of his father's illness, only to be recalled later as Bābur's health deteriorated, for she has him say that he had left Bābur healthy and cannot understand why he became ill so suddenly.

What follows is a prolonged death bed scene that Gulbadan presumably knew mainly from her mother and elder female relatives. Unlike the circumambulation story with its formulaic air of ritual self-sacrifice, her remaining narrative of her father's lingering illness convincingly suggests the self-absorbed preoccupations of a dying man who also happens to be an emperor. After describing Humāyūn's return she says Bābur repeatedly asked for his young son Hind-al. "Where is Hind-al? What is he doing?" Then when, Mīr Bardī Beg, the son of Hind-al's long-time guardian is given an audience, Bābur verbally assaults him, calling him *mardak* and blaming him for delaying Hind-al, implying Hind-al had been celebrating Mīr Bardī Beg's marriage in Lahore. Gulbadan convincingly conveys the sense of a weakening, perhaps semi-delirious man as she describes how Bābur asked Mīr Bardī Beg how tall his son has grown and constantly each hour said: "A thousand regrets

[105] HN, fs. 17a-b.

that I have not seen Hind-al, asking all who came, when will Hind-al arrive?"[106]

During the time of his illness Bābur told Māhīm Begim that marriages should be arranged for two of Gulbadan's sisters, Gulrang and Gulchihrah, literally the "Rose-colored" and Rosy-faced" *begim*s. They ought to be married, he reportedly says, and "it occurred to him" that they should be given to the two Chaghatay Mongol brothers, the ninth and tenth sons of his Mongol uncle Kichik Khan, the Sultāns who had been fighting with him on his last campaign. Later when Māhīm Begim is asked her opinion she agrees, and the two brothers are brought into the room and formally made to kneel before Bābur, ceremonially elevating them to the rank of sons-in-law.[107] These dynastic marriages consolidated Bābur's Chaghatay Mongol connections. They are another reminder if, one is needed, of the importance he attached to his maternal lineage and the reason why his dynasty is not just Tīmūrid but Tīmūrid-Mughul.

"All the while," Gulbadan writes, "the disturbance of his stomach/bowels intensified, [and] Humāyūn when he saw his father's condition worsen became distraught." The doctors, *hakīm*s, were unable to do more than hope for God's intervention. "Day by day he became weak and thin. Every day his disorder intensified." Then, Bābur summoned his *amīr*s and decreed:

> For years it has been my wish to give my rule to Humāyūn Mīrzā and myself retire to the *Bāgh-i Zarafshān*. Everything has come right but bodily health. Now this disorder has weakened me I decree that everyone recognize Humāyūn in my place and do not fail in good will to him.... Further, Humāyūn, I entrust to God you and your brothers and all kinfolk and my own people and your people and I [also] entrust them all to you.

"At these words," continues Gulbadan, "the onlookers and witnesses wept and lamented and his own auspicious eyes filled with tears." Three days later Jumāda I 937 a.h. or December 21, 1530, Bābur died. On Friday, December 29th Humāyūn Bādshāh sat on the throne and [those present said] "May all the world be blessed by his illustrious rule."[108]

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[106] HN, f. 18a.
[107] HN, fs. 18a-b.
[108] HN, fs. 18b-20a.

Bābur, who asked to be buried in Kabul, was initially interred in a garden across the river from the later site of the Tāj Mahal. Now "The eloquent of the age composed chronograms and elegies about his majesty."[109] Sixty reciters were appointed to offer the five daily prayers and read the entire Quran over the grave. The garden was endowed as a *waqf* or pious bequest to support the reciters and *ʿalīm*s with the entire revenues of Sikri and with additional funds from Bayanah. During her life Māhīm Begim assigned from her own estates a food allowance of an ox, two sheep and five goats for the morning meals and five goats at the time of afternoon prayer. Bābur's wife lived for an additional two and a half years, when she too suffered from a "disorder of the stomach/bowels" and died sometime in 1533. Gulbadan, whose description of these events convey genuine pathos, now at age ten "felt lonely and helpless... and night and day would weep, grieve and mourn."[110] She eventually returned to her own natural mother, Dildār Begim.

Bābur's body was later carried to Kabul sometime between 1539 and 1544, interred again in a simple tomb on a hill with an appropriately dramatic view. His great-grandson, Jahāngīr, made a pilgrimage to Kabul in 1607, where he read and annotated Bābur's *Vaqāʾiʿ* and visited the tomb.[111] He ordered a marble headstone erected and a marble platform placed before the tomb for prayers. Jahāngīr's son, Shāh Jahān, visited the site in 1640 and as befits his grandiose building projects in India, ordered it to be restored and greatly expanded into a major mausoleum complex with a small mosque and pool. He also added a pavilion where pilgrims could sit and eat out of the weather.[112]

In the spring of 1831 the British agent and explorer Alexander Burnes visited the complex, which survived largely unscathed until damaged in the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. "I lost no time in making excursions near Cabool," Burnes writes, "and chose the earliest opportunity to visit the tomb

[109] AN-I, 277.

[110] HN, f. 23b.

[111] TJ, I, 108-9.

[112] The tomb and its later history and modern (1970) plans for restoration are lovingly described with extensive photographs by Maria Teresa Shephard Parpagliolo in her study, *Kābul: The Bāgh-i Bābur, a Project and a Research into the Possibilities of a Complete Reconstruction* II in *Restorations* Giuseppi Tucci ed. (Rome: Instituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1972).

of the emperor Baber, which is about a mile from the city and situated in the sweetest spot of the neighborhood."

> The grave is marked by two erect slabs of white marble; and, as is common in the East, the different letters of a part of the inscription indicate the number of the year of the Hegira in which the Emperor died.... Near the Emperor, many of his wives and children have been interred; and the garden, which is small, has been surrounded by a wall of marble. A running and clear stream yet waters the fragrant flowers of this cemetery, which is the great holiday resort of the people of Cabool. In front of the grave, there is a small but chaste mosque of marble; and an inscription upon it sets forth that it was built in the year 1640, by order of the Emperor Shāh Jehan....[113]

Burnes then exclaims about the beauty of the view from the tomb in language that echoed Bābur's own when describing, as he so often did, the aesthetics of a dramatic natural prospect.

> If my reader can imagine a plain, about twenty miles in circumference, laid out with gardens and fields in pleasing irregularity, intersected by three rivulets, which wind through it by a serpentine course, and wash innumerable little forts and villages, he will have before him one of the meadows of Cabool. To the north lie the hills of Pughman, covered half way down with snow, and separated from the eye by a sheet of the richest verdure. On the other side, the mountains, which are bleak and rocky, mark the hunting preserves of kings; and the gardens of this city, so celebrated for fruit, lie beneath, the water being conducted to them with great ingenuity. I do not wonder at the hearts of the people being captivated with the landscape, and of Baber's admiration; for in his own words, "its verdure and flowers render Cabool, in spring, a heaven."[114]

Here was a poetic kind of second life, a conspicuous burial in an earthly paradise.

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[113] Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, II, 121-22.
[114] Ibid., 122-3.

EPILOGUE

BĀBUR AND THE TĪMŪRID RENAISSANCE

The term Tīmūrid Renaissance has been commonly applied to the cultural florescence that Tīmūr's descendants patronized in Harat and Samarqand and even more particularly to the Husayn Bayqara's splendid court in Harat, peopled with some of the greatest artistic and literary luminaries of the age in the eastern Islamic world.[1] However, as some scholars have observed, "renaissance" implies an earlier florescence, as exemplified by Renaissance Italy's relationship to the culture of classical Greece and/or Rome. No one has yet argued that such a cultural flowering occurred during Tīmūr's lifetime, notwithstanding his monumental building projects in Samarqand and nearby Shahr-i sabz. The real Tīmūrid rebirth occurred in north India following the battle of Panipat. It was there in the sixteenth century that the Tīmūrid-Chingīzid phoenix arose from the ashes of its own ineptitude and Uzbek conquests to establish a new, and from a Central Asian perspective, fabulously wealthy state. It was in India also that Tīmūrid-Mughul rulers presided over the development of a hybrid culture in which the Turco-Mongol, Perso-Islamic culture of the Tīmūrids absorbed and also influenced aspects of north Indian society.

In retrospect Bābur only sparked that renaissance, for his death only four and a half years after Panipat meant that he did not so much establish an empire as he bequeathed an idea or ambition for one. He himself notes that he did not even begin to implement his administration until after Kanwah, and it is difficult to know what he means by that other than his appointment of Tīmūrid and Chaghatay loyalists to important forts. During his brief rule revenue collection must have been based on Lūdī records using former Lūdī officials. Therefore, at the time of his death, Bābur's conquests in India represented little more than an initial military occupation by Turco-Mongol troops and Indian allies. Unlike the inhabitants

[1] See Jean-Paul Roux's chapter. "La Renaissance timouride," in his biography *BABUR, Histoire des Grands Moghols*, 51-93.

of Samarqand in 1511, no Indians, whether rulers or subjects, Afghāns or Rajputs, heralded Bābur's arrival in their midst, except to use him to further their own territorial ambitions. Events implicitly demonstrated that they resented his intrusion and assumptions of legitimacy. While Afghāns and Rajputs might have initially been cowed into submission, this did not imply anything more than a pragmatic kind of deference, deference not loyalty, the latter a word not even applicable to the relations between Tīmūrid victors and defeated Indian rulers at this period.

In his narrative for 1526-27, Bābur himself describes the fragile nature of the Tīmūrid-Mughul enterprise when he recounts the defections of recently defeated or intimidated rulers that occurred as the battle of Kanwah loomed. In doing so he reveals with stunning clarity how he and his Turco-Mongol *beg*s could lose control of their recently subjugated territories literally overnight the moment they exhibited the slightest sign of weakness. It was one of many political lessons that Bābur's descendants might have derived from reading the *Vaqā'i'*. It is an equally valuable lesson for historians when they discuss the foundation of empires. To really understand the nature of imperial conquest and consolidation of rule in the Tīmūrid-Mughul Empire, it is necessary to examine the identity and status of local elites, district by district, province by province, over the course of a century or more in order to understand the nature and degree of their submission and/or integration. As Bābur's brief experience in north India illustrates, it was extraordinarily difficult to move from military occupation to accepted, that is legitimate rule. He had scarcely even begun that process when he died.

The Tīmūrid-Mughuls were also limited by the lack of a significant Turco-Mongol population base that might offer troops or support. Even if the Afghāns were perennially riven by tribal, clan and personal factions they still could call on an ethnic core of fellow Afghāns in certain areas of the Panjab, the Duab region and even parts of the Gangetic valley. After Kanwah Afghān contingents posed the greatest threat to Tīmūrid-Mughul rule and within six months of Bābur's death the Afghan chiefs Bāyizīd and Biban renewed their challenge to the Tīmūrid regime. Humāyūn won his first battle with Afghān forces in 1532 in which Sultān Bāyizīd was killed, and he directed successful campaigns against other signifi-

cant Indian rulers—Sultān Bahādur in Gujarat in 1534-35 and later in Bengal. In 1539 and 1540, though, he suffered successive defeats at the hands of the Afghān commander Shīr Khan, later Shīr Shāh Sūrī, first in Bengal and then near Kannauj at the Battle of the Ganges.

Afghān opposition came as no surprise to Humāyūn, as Bābur had been pursuing their forces in his last campaign. Whether he was equally prepared for the harsh reality of Tīmūrid politics is uncertain. If he hadn't read his father's book or learned from his own experience he was given lessons in the realities of the Turco-Mongol inheritance and political system as soon as he came to power. First of all the Bayqara Tīmūrids, Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā and Muhammad Sultān Mīrzā, flouted Humāyūn's authority from the beginning of his troubled reign and, as Gulbadan Begim succinctly remarks, they were a perpetual problem thereafter.[2] Muhammad Zamān Mīrzā, for example, joined with the Gujarat Sultān after failing in an earlier bid for power. His political ambitions and obvious reluctance to accept Humāyūn's authority were even known to the Safavid historian Hasan-i Rūmlū, who devotes considerable space to Husayn Bayqara's grandson.[3] More threatening to Humāyūn's political survival was the treatment he received from his brothers, first during his decade of rule in India and then in Afghanistan following his losses to Shīr Khan.

Well before 1540 Humāyūn's brothers had exhibited their own political ambitions as they drifted in and out of cooperation with him. In 1538 Mīrzā Hind-al even briefly proclaimed his sovereignty by having the *khutbah* read in his name.[4] If Humāyūn had commanded his brothers' absolute loyalty it seems unlikely he would have been driven from India. However, by 1540 he had become a fugitive in the Indo-Afghan borderlands and was unable to take refuge in Kabul or Qandahar, which Kāmrān and ʿAskarī had by then occupied as their independent appanages. Thus the political mentality that marked and was responsible for much of the late Tīmūrid political collapse in Mawarannahr was exhibited anew in

[2] HN, f. 23a.

[3] Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Ahsan al-tawārīkh*, 314.

[4] AN, I, 338-39. Abū'l Fazl summarizes the events of Humāyūn's reign from the time of his accession until 1544, when he fled to Iran. Ibid., 283-437.

India. Wandering about in the region between western Rajasthan, the Sind and southern Afghanistan, Humāyūn now endured his own *qazaqlïq* period. In 1543 he even lost control of his son, Akbar, whom Askarī captured and later sent on to Kāmrān in Kabul. It seems as if Bābur's early history in Andijan with Ahmad Tambal and Jahāngīr was now being reenacted by his eldest son. Akbar, like Jahāngīr before him, had become a pawn of appanage politics.

Finally, in early 1544 Humāyūn sought refuge with the Safavid Shāh, Tahmasp, who welcomed him to Iran and treated him not as the refugee he undeniably was but as the once and future *pādshāh* of Hindūstān.[5] Here, apparently was another demonstration of the life-saving power of legitimacy, partly purchased by Humāyūn's coerced profession of the Shīʿī faith and his gift to Tahmasp in July 1544 of Badakhshānī rubies, along with a stunningly large diamond, possibly the Kuh-i nūr.[6] In loaning Humāyūn an estimated 10-12,000 troops Tahmasp seemed to be resurrecting the alliance Shāh Ismāʿīl briefly made with Bābur in 1511, and perhaps, like his father, he also hoped for continued anti-Uzbek cooperation. These troops were commanded mainly by Qizilbāsh leaders, that is Tahmasp's Turkic *amīr*s, and served for a limited if undetermined period.[7] Tahmasp evidently intended them principally to occupy Qandahar on his behalf. With these forces Humāyūn was able to arrest what then must have seemed to most observers his inexora-

[5] Abū'l Fazl describes his reception at Qazvin near the old Mongol capital of Sultaniya in July 1544. AN, I, 437-41. For a detailed account of Humāyūn's stay in Iran, including copies of letters between Humāyūn and Shāh Tahmasp, see Sukumar Ray, *Humāyūn in Persia* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society, 1948).

[6] The meeting and its aftermath, in which Bayram Khan evidently played a critical role, is ably described by Mahmudul Hasan Siddiqi, *Diwan of Bayram Khan*, "Introduction, 1-18. However, some of his details do not agree with those of Ray, *Humayun in Persia*.

[7] AN, I, 441-42 where the names of the commanders are given. They are unmistakably Qizilbāsh chiefs with names such as Afshār and Qājār, tribal leaders whose decendants formed the two most important successor dynasties to the Safavids in eighteenth century Iran. One source says that Humāyūn was given only 3,000 troops, another caution about accepting troop estimates at face value. See Ray, *Humāyūn in Persia*, 48 n. 2. These Qizilbāsh commanders may have been engaged only to help Humāyūn capture Qandahar. Their names are not found in later lists. Names of *beg*s who were evidently personally loyal or in the service of Humāyūn at this time are given in AN, I, 447-52. Humāyūn and Bayram Khan later seized Qandahar from their nominal Iranian allies. Ray, *Humāyūn in Persia*, 53-61.

ble collapse. With an army possibly larger than Bābur commanded at Panipat and probably far more reliable than he himself had previously commanded in India, Humāyūn quickly returned to Afghanistan.

In March 1545 he arrived outside Qandahar to begin the decade-long reconquest of the Tīmūrid-Mughul empire, first overcoming his brothers and then only in July 1555 defeating the Afghāns at Sirhind.[8] Humāyūn's victory can hardly be attributed to Tīmūrid unity and Afghān factionalism, but at least he fought free of the divisive effect of his brothers' ambitions.[9] Without actual descriptions of the battle it is only possible to offer a general suggestion that it was Humāyūn's Tīmūrid stature, his powerful sense of legitimacy and membership in a larger cultural and political world than the Afghāns inhabited, that left a Tīmūrid-Mughul rather than an Afghan state ruling Hindūstān for the next two centuries. Daulat Khan's apparent inability to speak Persian when Bābur captured and confronted him in 1526 indicates that some Afghān leaders at least, were very parochial, knowing perhaps Pashtu and Hinduwī, but having little contact with the Perso-Islamic world in Iran or Mawarannahr. In any event, the idea and prestige of Bābur's conquest had improbably survived to be finally transformed into an empire by his grandson, Akbar, who as a boy of twelve acceded to the throne when Humāyūn, like his grandfather, ʿUmar Shaykh, unexpectedly died an accidental death in 1556. In Humāyūn's case, he tripped and apparently fractured his skull, as he hurried down the steep steps of his library to answer the call to prayer.

The empire that Bābur began, Humāyūn re-established and Akbar consolidated was one whose basic character was defined by Bābur's own political and cultural inheritance, and it was a sophisticated world apart from what is known of many and perhaps most Afghāns of the period. The character of this state remained funda-

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[8] Kāmrān was captured and blinded in 1553. ʿAskarī was captured, imprisoned in Kabul, eventually released to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, dying en route, but only in 1558. AN, I, 604 & 575. Hind-al, who had accompanied Humāyūn and been with him when he retook Kabul from Kāmrān, died in a battle in 1551. AN, I, 582-85.

[9] The names of Humāyūn's principal commanders when he retook India are given by Bāyizīd Bayāt, *Tazkirah-i Humāyūn va Akbar* M. Hidāyat Husayn ed., (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1941), 172-77.

mentally unchanged, despite the distinct individual characteristics of Tīmūrid-Mughul rulers. It was a Turco-Mongol conquest state of observant Sunni Muslims steeped in Perso-Islamic culture whose rulers had one principal goal, to perpetuate and enrich the Tīmūrid-Chaghatay elite. Most of these rulers and many of the elite also exhibited Bābur's seeming preference for sūfī devotionalism over rigid formal worship. Bābur himself brought the Naqshbandīs to India, not so much as an order, but as a group of Central Asian religious aristocrats, politically linked with his family and soon to intermarry with them as well.

Despite the dynasty's common name in India and later in the West, Bābur's empire had almost nothing in common with the nomadic empires of his ancestors, Tīmūr and Chingīz Khan. Little, that is, except the critical Mongol military role in Bābur's major victories! Bābur thought of himself as a ruler of a sedentary, agrarian state that he would rule according to accepted Muslim administrative norms. He had observed his father doing so in Ferghanah. Like his Mongol grandfather, Yūnas Khan, Bābur loved cities, in his case, Samarqand, Harat and Kabul. Indeed, apart from certain specific tenets of Islam his own social goals seem largely indistinguishable from the literate residents of most Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies, a civilized, that is urban life, distinguished by communal institutions and the ritualized camaraderie of shared drink,—or *maʿjūn*—meals and literary and artistic culture. Greek, Roman and early Christian writers in the Mediterranean region were virtually unanimous in seeing the city as Bābur saw it, as the "urbium cultus" of Tacitus, the touchstone of civilization.[10] Sounding somewhat like Bābur writing on Samarqand, the writer Tertullian, who as a Christian was, like Bābur, a member of a congregational religion, said that Christians lived in a "world of *fora*, *macella*, *balnea* and *tabernae* (town squares, market places, baths and inns)."[11] Tertullian would have admired Samarqand, its bazars, *hammāms* and gardens and understood even its mosques. It seems certain also that he would have sympathized with Bābur's critique of Indian social life.

In Bābur's case it is tempting to use the geometry or mathemat-

[10] Quoted by A. T. Fear, *Rome and Baetica*, urbanization in southern Spain, 50 B. C.-A. D. 150. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 6.
[11] Ibid., 6.

ics more generally as a metaphor for his civilized ideal. He valued a regulated social life lived among straightened streams in geometrically proportionate kiosks and gardens, where he and his *beg*s who followed the straight path of the Quran would recite or compose mathematically structured poetry and music. In that context it is worth observing that from the perspective of mathematical and scientific, that is in Greek terms, philosophical knowledge, populations of the central Tīmūrid regions of Khurāsān and Mawarannahr did not have to go through a renaissance in Bābur's lifetime. They were already the beneficiaries of the translation movement of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate. Scholars who were legatees of these translations were exemplified by the outstanding scientific/philosophical figures of the Perso-Islamic world in eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that is by Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī, ʿUmar Khayyām and al-Tūsī.[12] Bābur was only a distant and indirect heir of these scholars' thought, but still reflected some of their influence, at least in his appreciation for geometric balance, quantification and an awareness of the precision that astronomical observations offered to the placement of the *qiblah.* Even the horoscope of his grandson Akbar was determined "according to the altitudes taken by the Greek astrolabe and by calculations based on the *Gurkhanī* tables [the astronomical tables of Ulugh Beg]."[13] When Bābur's and his Tīmūrid predecessors' contact with and knowledge of China and appreciation for Chinese ceramics and designs is also recalled, it is difficult to agree that Bābur matured, as E. M. Forster wittily expressed it, "at the extreme north of the fashionable world." Even with the devastation of Chingīz Khan and Tīmūr—indeed partly because of the cultural contacts that followed the brutal Mongol unification of Eurasia—it is possible to argue that Harat and Samarqand, Khurasan and Mawarannahr, jointly comprised one of the most intellectually fashionable and dynamic regions of the Islamic world between the eleventh and early sixteenth century.[14]

Indian Muslims of the Tīmūrid-Mughul period did not have to

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[12] For The "House of Knowledge" see Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 53-60.

[13] AN, I, 69-70. Just to be safe Akbar's horoscope was also read according to calculations of Indian astrologers. Ibid., 85-95.

[14] The remarkable cross-fertilization between China and Iran during the Mongol period is described by Thomas T. Allsen, *Conquest and Culture in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

discuss these specific aspects of Bābur's heritage to convince themselves of Bābur's significance. Akbar's amanuensis and companion, Abū'l Fazl, provides the most eloquent appreciation in the *Akbar nāmah*, one that gives another meaning to the idea of the Tīmūrid renaissance as it portrays Bābur as a "perfect man."[15] If Abū'l Fazl had known Italian he would likely have described Bābur as "l'uomo universale," an ideal now commonly known as the "Renaissance man." In very much the same way that Forster divides his appreciation of Bābur into the political and the artistic, Abū'l Fazl extols him first as a monarch and then as an intellectual. "It would be impossible," he writes, "even if volumes were employed, to detail the perfections of this Holy One." "Among them," Abūʿl Fazl says with considerable accuracy even when his panegyric agenda is considered, "He possessed the eight essentials of empire, that is, (1) high fortune; (2) great designs; (3) conquering power (4) administrative capacity; (5) civilizing faculty; (6) devotion to the welfare of God's servants; (7) the cherishing of the army; (8) the restraining it from evil." Despite Abū'l Fazl's formulaic presentation most readers of the *Vaqā'iʿ* at least would agree that Bābur was an extremely lucky man with undisguised imperial ambitions who enjoyed, after a time, military success. While his administrative capacity is only suggested by a few passages, such as his letter to Khwājah Kalān about plans for Kabul, he certainly had a civilized intellect, supported both sūfīs and apparently, but less vocally, the *ʿulamā*. Bābur, of course, valued the army, even if he did not publicly cherish its crucial Mongol contingents, and, by his evidence once again, prevented Mongols from engaging in the destructive rampages that they visited on Hisar in 1512.

Then Abū'l Fazl offers a largely accurate evaluation of Bābur's cultural achievements, even though he probably could not read Turkī and almost certainly borrowed from Haydar Mīrzā's fulsome praise of his older cousin.

> And in acquired accomplishments, he was at the head of his Age. He held high rank as a poet and prose-writer, and especially in Turkī poetry. The Turkī *dīwān* (*dīwān*-i Turkī) of his Majesty is of great

[15] Not apparently intending to characterize him as the *al-insānu'l kāmil* of Sufism, "one who has realized his essential oneness with the Divine Being." R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, repr. 1967), 77-78.

> eloquence and purity, and its contents are charming. His book of Masnawī which has the name of *Mubīn* (clear) is a famous composition and is mentioned by great applause by critics. He versified the *Risīla-i wālidīya* of Khwaja Ahrār which is a pearl from the ocean of knowledge, and very excellent it was. He also wrote his Acts (*Wāqiʿāt*) from the beginning of his reign to the time of departure with fidelity and in a lucid and eloquent style. It is an Institute for all earthly sovereigns and a manual for teaching right thoughts and proper ideas.... His Majesty was also eminently skilled in music and composed charming verses in Persian.... His Majesty was also famous for treatises on prosody, and, among them is a book called *mufassal* which is a commentary on the science.[16]

Most modern scholars would agree with Abū'l Fazl's sentiments and even go beyond his praise to observe that the *Vaqāʾiʿ* represents the single greatest prose composition in the Turkī literature of Mawarannahr, which in its remarkably open and realistic portrayal of individuals, politics and military campaigns, ought to be "an Institute for all earthly sovereigns." No other Tīmūrid, Chingīzid, Ottoman, Safavid or Tīmūrid-Mughul wrote anything of comparable scope or literary power. Bābur's marginal political importance and tumultuous life lived outside major power centers and elaborate courts may at least partly explain why he wrote and wrote as he did. No court historian did or could have chronicled his life. Then too, even when writing much of the manuscript in India, he did not operate within a highly structured traditional court setting, hemmed about with cadres of artistically fastidious literati. While Bābur's frequent insertions of poetic aphorisms in the *Vaqāʾiʿ* show he was concerned with producing a work that possessed traditional attributes of scholarly writing, he wrote primarily to inform rather than to demonstrate his rhetorical skills.

The memoir of his great-grandson, Jahāngīr, offers the most important basis for comparison. It is in its own way a fascinating, idiosyncratic text, exceptional among seventeenth century rulers in Europe, the Islamic world or Asia, but it lacks the artistic ambition, dynamism, structure and multiple purposes of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. Some of these differences may be attributable to the dramatically distinct careers of these men. Indeed, Bābur would likely have seen in Jahāngīr, at least at certain periods of his career, another decadent ruler in the mold of the late Husayn Bayqara. However, the

[16] AN, I, 277-79.

comparison of these two exceptional texts also raises the question of the intelligence of each man. It is impossible to say that Bābur was more intelligent than his descendant—although he did possess a luminous intellect, but he seems to have possessed a more active, systemizing mind than Jahāngīr.

Abū'l Fazl himself was hardly in a position to point out inconsistencies and contradictions in the *Vaqā'i'* or to remind his audience that Bābur's "conquering power" was preceded by a long series of ignoble military disasters. To be fair to the him, though, it is important to understand that in writing the *Vaqā'i'* Bābur was, among his many other purposes, trying to demonstrate that he was the perfect man, or the perfect ruler in the mold of Yūnas Khan. Just the evidence of the *Vaqā'i'*, with its repeated citations of classical Persian verse and composition of his own derivative Turkī verse, was sufficient implicit evidence that he was an *adīb*, a cultured, civilized man and therefore, partly for that reason, qualified to rule. Bābur was justifiably proud of this work, which took precedence over his poetry during his Indian years. In the text itself he tried to show how his life was devoted to becoming the perfect ruler of the late Tīmūrid world: a clever military tactician, a consummate poet, a good Sunni Muslim. The *Vaqā'i'* is thus partly a record of his military, literary and religious accomplishment. Bābur does not only describe the progression of his life from youthful insecurity to mature reflection, but from military incompetence to skillful triumph, from insecure, novice writer to skilled poet and theorist of prosody and from unreflective, youthful Muslim to a student of *fiqh* and pious adulthood. That is he wanted the Turkī-speaking world to see himself as he saw Baysunghur Mīrzā or as Haydar Mīrzā saw Yūnas Khan, a man skilled in the accomplishments that mattered most to the Persianized, Islamized Turco-Mongol aristocrat of the late Tīmūrid period: war, poetry and religion.

What is most engaging for the twenty-first century reader is that his writings reveal that Bābur was not a perfect man, but an acutely intelligent, engaging, complex and also typically egotistical human being struggling to make his way in a chaotic, unpredictable political environment. In this way too he writes about himself as a person whose characteristics call forth the other common perception of the so-called "Renaissance man," that is not only an individual who has multifaceted interests but one who displays personality traits associated with the Italian Renaissance or some-

times even with the "Rise of the West," among other things, intellectual curiosity, unapologetic egotism, and ruthlessness. The egos exhibited by Cellini and Bābur in their respective autobiographies are indistinguishable. Indistinguishable also is the sense that both manage to convey of the complex, indeterminacy of their personal lives, and in Bābur's case also, his political career. Perhaps nothing more important emerges from this biography of Bābur than an appreciation for the complexity of individuals and the contingencies of politics in Central Asia, Afghanistan and northern India in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

Biographies are devoted to individuals, and individuals are rarely evident in either Islamic or western historiography for most of the recorded history of the non-western world. The critique of Orientalism has achieved part of its goal of sensitizing western scholars and the broader public to the necessity of discarding simplistic and essentially anti-humanistic images of Islam and Asia. However, that critique by itself has not generally succeeded in displacing prevalent, one dimensional caricatures with multifaceted individuals. Teaching by example rather than preaching with outraged rhetoric is probably a more effective way of educating a skeptical or simply uninterested public. In this context the really telling legacies of the *Vaqā'i'* and Bābur's verse are his displays of recognizable human emotion: his profound grief at the death of a Mongol friend, his adolescent emotional confusion, his prickly relations with Tīmūrid cousins, his openly enthusiastic appreciation of natural beauty, his irritated critique of his eldest son, his touching poetic expression of his illnesses, his irrational, exasperated anger on his deathbed and more than all these, his undiminished delight in the gathering of friends. In his case "A good memory" is not merely, as he remarks, " a second life," but the testament to the human vitality of an entire civilization.

"New Lives;" Bābur in Indian and Uzbek Nationalism

Astrologers often attributed events in Tīmūrid history to the conspicuous conjunction of the planets or other heavenly bodies. It is tempting, therefore, to speculate what heavenly signs they would have found to explain the most recent episodes in Tīmūrid history, the very earthly conjunction of events that have made Bābur a

pivotal figure in the nationalist politics of both India and Uzbekistan in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. In both countries many people have come to see him as one symbol of their past and "national" future. However, the contrast between his symbolic stature in these two societies is starkly different.

In India Bābur has come to be seen by many Hindus as a personification of Muslim oppression because of the mosque he is believed to have ordered constructed at Ayodhya, near Faizabad, a city nearly due east of Lucknow. As has been seen, it is impossible to know whether or not Bābur actually ordered the construction of this building. He does not mention the mosque in the extant pages of the *Vaqāʾiʿ*. However, members of the Viswa Hindu Parishad, or World Hindu Council, made the mosque an issue in the 1980's, because Hindus had long believed that two stone columns included in the mosque were taken from a Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Rama, one of Vishnu's avatars or incarnations. Rama himself is thought to have been born in Ayodhya, and the region was known by Bābur's descendants in the late sixteenth century to have just these sacred associations.[17] Council members have blamed Bābur directly for the destruction of a Vaisnavite temple, which was believed to be the source of the stone columns, as well as for the construction of the mosque itself. One member of the Council wrote in 1993 that "Traditions and records of all kinds are unanymous [sic] in holding Bābar [sic] responsible for the replacement of the Rama temple with the Bābarī mosque."[18] The issue became a national one in India when in 1992 two leading members of the BJP, the Hindu nationalist party, by then a powerful political force in north India, helped organize thousands of followers of the World Hindu Council who subsequently attacked and demolished the mosque.[19] The assault provoked widespread communal violence in which more than one thousand people were killed, and the destruction of the mosque as well as the future use of the site has remained an emotionally charged issue in Indian politics ever since. In the

[17] AA, II, 182.

[18] Harsh Narain, *The Ayodhya Temple-Mosque Dispute (*Delhi: Penman Publishers, 1993), 61.

[19] See among other sources, Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave. Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India, The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 79-80 & 95-95.

early twenty-first century the site has become an archeological dig, as politically motivated workers search for physical proof of its Vaishnavite origins.[20]

At nearly the same time many Indians were reviling Bābur, people in his homeland had begun raising him to nearly iconic status. Just at the moment that the goals of the World Hindu Council were catalyzed by the political ambitions of a few leaders of the BJP, the Soviet Union dissolved, leaving behind a group of republics stretching from the Baltic to Central Asia. Some of these states, like the Baltic republics, possessed clearly articulated national identities, but others and especially the five in Central Asia, emerged as former Soviet "republics" that had been carved out of territories occupied by Imperial Russia in the nineteenth century. Prior to that time all five states: Kazakistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, had been subject to the Uzbek khanates that had succeeded the Shībānī Khan-led confederation that had defeated, killed or expelled the Tīmūrids and Chaghatay Chingīzids from Mawarannahr in the early sixteenth century. In 1991, though, the leaders of these republics suddenly found themselves in the unfamiliar role as heads of new nations, nations created by fiat and historical accident rather than by indigenous political movements. These men quickly set about constructing national identities, not from scratch, but by molding local cultural traditions.

In Uzbekistan, the most populous of all five states and the one possessing the historic cities of Bukhara and Samarqand, leaders have claimed the entire Islamic history of the region as their national tradition, so that any political, literary, scientific or scholarly figures of note have become emblems of Uzbek greatness.[21] There are perhaps even more ironies in the creation of this national myth than most, but that is partly due to the necessity of constructing a new nation at a moment's notice. However, from the perspective of this biography the greatest irony of all is the elevation of Tīmūr and prominent Tīmūrids to an Uzbek national pantheon.[22]

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[20] Amy Waldman, "India's Big Dig: Will It Settle or Inflame a Controversy?" *New York Times*, 3 April 2003, p. A 9.

[21] For an introduction to Uzbek history and culture see Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990). Otherwise the following is based on the author's visit to Uzbekistan in the spring of 2000.

[22] Beatrice Forbes Manz offers the best introduction to the "cult" of Timur in

Tīmūr has been "given the stature of the founder of the Uzbek nation."[23] Tīmūr and Tīmūrids are not the only figures so honored. The medieval mathematician, al-Khwārizmī, and the Harat poet and proponent of Turkī, Navāʾī, have also been implicitly elected to the Uzbek pantheon. In Tashkent, though, an heroic statue of Tīmūr stands near a museum devoted to his exploits, while in Samarqand new attention is being paid to the scientific research of Ulugh Beg, who is quite reasonably seen as a patron "saint" of Samarqand State University.

Far to the east in Andijān, however, it is Bābur who symbolizes past greatness. Overseen by the dynamic Bābur Foundation, the city has erected a monumental statue in the city center, a museum, and created a lovely hillside park featuring an impression of a Tīmūrid-era building with internal wall paintings illustrating Bābur's career—just as Tīmūr had scenes from his conquests painted in Samarqand. Finally, high up on the slope a replica of Bābur's Kabul tomb has been erected overlooking this building and the eastern Ferghanah countryside, exactly the kind of scenic prospect Bābur would have chosen and a reminder of his gravesite near Kabul. When the author attended a *suhbat* in this garden with Uzbek companions in the year 2000, it seemed that both he and Bābur himself had come full circle.

Uzbek nationalist ideology in her article, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," *Journal of World History* 13, 1 (Spring 2002), 16-24.

[23] Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 16.

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GLOSSARY

GENERAL:

Ark (T) (ارك)—Interior of a fortress, a citadel, a seat of power.

Aymaq (T) (ايماغ ،ايماق)—family, clan or subdivision of a tribe. (Mongol—*ayman*).

Amīr (A) (امير)—Superior military or political rank, see also beg.

Arïq (T) (اريق)—irrigation channel.

Beg (T) (بيك)—superior military rank. (Ottoman -*bey*).

Beg atekeh (T) (بيك اتكه)—Military guardian/tutor.

Buluk (T) (بلوك)—An administrative division, sometimes a subdivision of a *tuman*.

Chaghatay (T-M) (چغتاى)—1. Chingīz Khan's second son, and his descendants. 2. The nineteenth century European name for the Turkic language spoken in Chaghatay Khan's dominions.

Chahārbāgh (chārbāgh) (P) (چهار باغ)—Garden bisected by four water courses, sometimes but not always symmetrical.

Chapqun (T) (چاپقون)—A raid by horsemen.

Eshik ikhtiyarï (T-A) (ايشيك اختيارى)—"Lord of the Gate;" Beg trusted with administrative and/or military authority; also "ulugh ve ikhtiyār beg" and "sāhib-i ikhtiyār." See especially BN-A, 606-09.

Fatrat (A) (فترة) —intermission, interval, interregnum.

Gûnyā (Gr) (كونيا)—rectangularity.

Hamkāsah (P) (همكاسه)—boon companion. See also *nadīm* and *musāhib*.

Ichki beg (T) (ايچكى بيك)—military rank, second to *beg*.

Il (T-M) (ایل)—tribe, people, see also *ulus*.

Khan, Qan or Qa'an (T-M) (خان، قان)—chief/leader of Mongol/Turkic tribal confederation/empire.

Kökeltash (M-T) (کوکلتاش، کوکلداش)—foster brother or sister, "milk-brother."

Kürgen (M) (کورکان)—Son-in-law; title taken by Temür and Ulugh Beg.

Māl-i amān (P) (مال امان)—indemnity levied on conquered cities/territories.

Māwarānnahr (A) (ماوراءالنهر)—Transoxiana, lands northeast of the Amu Darya river.

Mulkgīrliq (A-P-T) (ملکگیرلیق، ملکگیرلیك)—conquest, imperialism.

Musāhib (A) (مصاحب)—boon companion. See also *hamkāsah* and *nadīm*.

Nadīm (A) (ندیم)—boon companion. See also *hamkāsah* and *musāhib*.

Nökör, Naukar (M-T-P) (نوکور،نوکر)—liegeman, follower, dependent, servant.

Orchin (T-M) (اورچین)—a district, see also *tuman*, *parganah*.

Qaum (A) (قوم)—tribe, people, family.

Qazaq (T) (قزاق)—stateless or homeless; a warrior or raider.

Qauchin (M) (قوچین)—an hereditary military class and/or social group.

Sāhib Qirān (A) (صاحب قران) "Lord of the Fortunate [Astrological] Conjunction." Title given to Tīmûr and afterwards to Shāh Jahān as the "Sānī" or second Tīmûr.

Shāhrukhī (P) (شاهرخی)—Timurid silver coin, sometimes known as *tangah* (T) or *tangah-i misqālī* (T-A).

Tagha'ï, Taghayï (T) (تغائ، تغایی، طغائ)—Maternal uncle.

Tamgha (M-T) (تمغا)—seal, tax-stamp; urban commercial tax.

Tümen, tuman (M-T) (تومان)—10,000 fighting men, a district supporting 10,000 men. See also *orchin* and *parganah*

Tuqqan (T) (توغغان, توققان)—relation, children of the same mother.

Tuqqanlïq (T) (توققانليق)—blood relationship, uterine relation.

Uruq (T) (اوروق) family; camp or entourage.

Ulus (T-M) (اولوس) (T-M)—tribe or people; gathering.

Vilāyat [lar] (A-T) (ولايت)—district; homeland; for Bābur Mawarannahr. See also watan (A).

Yigach (T) (ييغاچ)—a variable distance, sometimes a mile, sometimes a *farsang* (2-4 miles).

Yigit (T) (ييكيت)—literally "youth," usually an individual warrior with no independent following or means.

POETRY:

Bayt (A) (بيت)—verse or line of a poem

Ghazal (A) (غزل)—lyric or ode, poem of approximately 6-15 lines with rhyme aa, ba, ca etc. for the *misra*s or half-lines of each *bayt* or verse.

Masnavī (A) (مثنوى)—poem usually longer than a ghazal of unrestricted subject and length rhyme aa, bb, cc for the *misra*s or half-lines of each *bayt* or verse.

Misraʿ (A) (مصرع)—half-line of verse.

Matlaʿ (A) (مطلع)—first *bayt* or line of a poem.

Maqtaʿ (A) (مقطع)—last *bayt* or line of a poem.

Radīf (A) (رديف)—the word following the rhyme.

Rubāʿī (A) (رباغى)—poem of two *bait*s or four *misra*s with rhyme aaba for the *misra*s of each *bayt* or verse.

Qasīdah (A) (قصیده)—Eulogy, sometimes mystical verse of multiple lines with rhyme ab, ab for the *misras* or half-lines of each *bayt* or verse.

Qitʿah (A) (قطعه)—short poem, usually 2-15 lines, unrestricted topic with rhyme ab, ab for the *misras* of each *bayt* or verse.

Takhallus (A)—(تخلص)—the signature and/or pen name of the author, often found in the penultimate line in *ghazals* or in *rubāʿīs*.

GEOGRAPHY:

1. *Mawarannahr and Northern Afghanistan*:
   - Andijan—اندجان.
   - Aura Tipa—اورا تیپا.
   - Badakhshan—بدخشان.
   - Balkh—بلخ.
   - Bukhara—بخارا
   - Ferghanah—فرغانه.
   - Hisar—حصار.
   - Khujand—خجند.
   - Isfarah—اسفره.
   - Marghinan—مرغینان.
   - Qarshi—قرشی.
   - Qunduz—قندز.
   - Samarqand—سمرقند.
   - Sukh—سوخ.
   - Ush—اوش.
   - Uzgend—اوزکند.
2. *Kabul and Southern Afghanistan*:
   - Adinahpur—آدینهپور.
   - Bamian—بامیان.
   - Bajaur—بجور.
   - Bannu—بنو.
   - Gardez—کردیز.
   - Ghazni—غزنی.
   - Harat—هری.
   - Istalif— استالیف.
   - Pamghan—پمغان.
   - Qandahar—قندهار.

3. *India*:

Agra—اکره.

Alwar—الور.

Bayanah—بیانه.

Bherah—بهره.

Chandiri—چندیری

Chitor—چتر.

Delhi—دلی

Dhulpur—دولپور.

Gwaliar—کوالیار

Kanwah—کانواه.

Lahore—لاهور.

Panipat—پانیپت.

Ranthambor—رنتنبور.

Sambal—سنبل

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